Tough Talk With Al Haig

Why Business Can't Manage • Sense and Sociobiology • Hostages and Bankers

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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The Neoconservative Dream World

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TRB

from Washington
February 7, 1981

Can Reagan Govern?

An extraordinarily interesting time—the showdown on inflation has begun. The immediate question is whether Reagan can run the White House. The longer question is whether America can govern itself. Neither answer is certain.

The country is living beyond its means and paying for it by the concealed tax of inflation. Carter sent a phony budget to Congress just before leaving, minimizing his deficit for 1981-82 at $27.5 billion. Actually, if corrected for off-budget items and a proposed gasoline tax which Congress won't even look at, the deficit is around $73 billion, an extraordinary sum! Inflation now runs at 12.5 percent. Inflation at that rate would reduce the dollar to nine cents in 20 years. Everybody agrees this is bad, can't last, must be corrected. But will it be?

In the campaign, Reagan was glib. He said that he could cut the budget 17 percent spit, spat by removing "fraud, waste, and abuse." Nobody believed him, but he got an electoral college landslide nevertheless, in which half the eligible voters sat on their hands and didn't vote. Reagan is an attractive, ingratiating man, with a kind of aw-shucks Hollywood elegance, but the public only half believes in him. A Yankelovich poll for *Time* reports a surprisingly skeptical, sour mood for a honeymoon. Four years ago 62 percent expressed trust and confidence in Carter (the first outsider sent to chastise Washington). Now the vote is only 48 percent for Reagan, the second outsider in succession. All he has to do is to get profligate Congress to tighten the nation's money belt, the last thing that lobbyists, pressure groups, and interest bodies want. If Reagan is to do this, he must do it right away. The honeymoon doesn't last long: he loses his novelty, the press begins to criticize. . . . We first elect our president, then we destroy him.

Before going further, let's consider some related facts.

America's system of government is the only one of its kind. A hundred new governments were founded after World War II; not one that survived picked the American system. In Washington the president seems to have unlimited power but doesn't (not in domestic affairs, anyway); there are vetoes scattered all over town in congressional subcommittees, in bureaucratic alleys, in business lobbies. America's system of checks and balances is like traveling in a political square-rigger during the aviation age.

Another point is that Americans are spoiled. The economic pie used to get bigger every year, but not recently. With six percent of the world's population, we use half of the world's gasoline. Other nations tax gasoline a dollar and a half a gallon; we tax it about 15 cents. The problem goes deeper. Our enemy Russia has a two-year compulsory military service, as do some of our allies. We have voluntary service. Again, our industrial plant needs refurbishing. Japan now manufactures more cars than any other nation. Our factory machinery has been aging. One reason: high interest rates make it too costly to modernize—another offshoot of inflation.

I could go on, but you see what I mean. American banks are overextended in loans to poor countries where the failure of a big establishment could produce a world financial crunch. Again, bigger arms expenditures are inflationary, and so is decontrol of oil and gas prices. Finally, Reagan's own economic team is divided between the radical supply-siders, including lively, evangelical David Stockman, the new budget chief, and the moderate Republican conservatives, like elder statesman Arthur Burns, who want a program requiring sacrifices to balance the budget.

It's a fascinating time to watch Washington. This is one of the greatest institutional tests that our system of checks and balances has had. In his poignant farewell address, Jimmy Carter said that the presidency is "at once the most powerful office in the world—and among the most severely constrained by law and custom." He said that "today we are asking our political system to do things of which the founding fathers never dreamed."

Exactly. Carter couldn't make it work. Can Reagan? He's had a little reprieve in the debauch over the hostages. It is interesting to note that for 12 days (January 17 to January 28), with one exception, the *Washington Post* had no other news except the hostages above the fold on the front page. Unaccountably, on January 24, word that William F. Clark had been named deputy secretary of state broke in. (Probably some senior editor was on vacation.)

The public believes that if a president wants a program, he gets it in Washington. To them the problem is personal, not institutional. Didn't Roosevelt achieve the New Deal? But he had the Depression to aid him. Nobody can say Carter didn't try. In his first 18 months, he made major proposals to Congress on cutting pork barrel water projects, financing Social Security, a comprehensive energy program, a tax rebate program, hospital cost containment, and welfare reform. One after another, these proposals went to a Democratic Congress and foundered. He dealt poorly with Congress, his advisers were inexperienced, Congress was fragmented and undisciplined. But can it be said that the post-imperial presidency worked very well? And now comes Reagan. He has started off better with Congress and his gift of Hollywood communication may help explain things to the public as Carter never did. But the problem has grown worse. Reagan seems wedded to the Kemp-Roth-Stockman supply-side theory, that a tax cut will so stimulate the economy that it will increase, not reduce, the tax take; and that the added revenues will balance the budget in two or three years. Can anybody believe this? Yes, it will stimulate the economy, but it is likely to bring roaring inflation, too, if not accompanied by budget cuts. Congress likes to cut taxes. But cut the budget? Cut welfare and health services, cut farm subsidies and Social Security, cut all the other programs it loves?

If we go on with inflation, we shall probably end with a crash, and we must not do that. But who's to stop us? Can our divided government cope with special interest groups, agree on remedies, allocate sacrifices? In short, can our government govern?

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Correspondence

Aiding repression

To the editors:

This letter is in reference to the last paragraph of your editorial "Welcome to Hard-Line Times" (*TNR*, January 24, 1981). You say that the likely Reagan support for the "disintegrating government of El Salvador" will have "tragic consequences not only for what's left of a democratic center in that country but also for our relations with Mexico," and you say it's "not easy to see" what our policy toward El Salvador ought to be, but that in any case we ought not to have cut off military aid to the present junta government. I think Reagan's support for the present government of El Salvador will have tragic consequences not because the government is disintegrating nor because of our relations with Mexico but because it will be another example of how our country, time after time, has provided aid to other countries with the effect of making their repression of their own citizens more effective.

Furthermore, the mistake of the Carter government was not, as you say it was, to cut off military aid but, having cut it off, to restore it.

One misses in your editorial any mention of the testimony of the church in El Salvador about the conditions there and the true nature of the "rebels of the left," whom you see as "fast falling under the control of Castroite and pro-Russian elements," but whom the church there and the National Council of Bishops here have urged us to support.

David Ferry
Wellesley College
Wellesley, Massachusetts

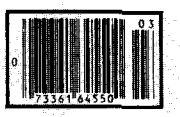
TNR fails math

To the editors:

E. H. Anderson's doubling period rule (72 divided by the growth rate) (Correspondence, *TNR*, January 24, 1981), while closer to correct than whatever computation was employed by TRB (December 13, 1980), is still wrong. To be general and (apart from rounding error) absolutely correct, Anderson should have said, "The natural logarithm of one plus any annual rate of increase (expressed as a decimal, e.g., 0.025) divided into the natural logarithm of two (approximately equal to .693147) gives the number of years necessary to double." For an annual growth rate of 2.5 percent, the doubling period is, in fact, 28.071 years, not 28.8 years. In light of the ready availability for less than $20 of calculators capable of the necessary calculations, such imprecise rules of thumb as "72 divided by . . ." have outlived their usefulness.

Stephen P. Dresch, Chairman
Institute for Demographic and Economic Studies
New Haven, Connecticut

(We have received eight letters on this. The subject is now closed.)



To the editors:

Did you have to? I mean really, was it necessary? I couldn't believe it. In fact it took me several days before I noticed that disgusting computer price tag. No longer are you $1.25 per copy; now you're coded! And don't tell me about modernization, inventories, and marketing.

Is somebody tracking me?
Into the files I go. . . .

At least you could have waited till 1984 to make the change.

David Clare
Hayward, California

The editors reply:

Yes, it was necessary. *TNR* cannot be distributed on newsstands without it.

Baraka unlinked

To the editors:

It is saddening to find in the enlightened pages of *The New Republic* a close linkage made among Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka) and one of the greatest American writers, Ralph Ellison, and another major figure, Richard Wright ("Ralph Ellison's Invisible Novel," *TNR*, January 17, 1981). Baraka supposedly is at least as "eloquent and influential a spokesman" as Ellison and Wright for what, "'on the lower frequencies,' it means to be black and American."

Nonsense. I recently heard Baraka's ravings on radio station WBAI against all whites and the United States, applauding how our country is "getting its backside kicked" by Iran, and spewing forth venom against all democracies. I read his anti-Semitic piece in the *Village Voice* supposedly renouncing his former anti-Semitism but going on to reaffirm it. Baraka is a proponent of the kind of totalitarian, "socialist," violent, anti-white black nationalism that Ellison has opposed his entire life.

Baraka is also a literary mediocrity. John Simon wrote that *Dutchman* was a poor play and referred to Baraka's "often consciously arty language and the vacuity of his symbols," and said the play was "merely propaganda . . . not truth."

Ralph Ellison wrote in the *New York Review of Books* in 1964 of *Blues People*: "Jones attempts to impose an ideology upon this cultural complexity, and this might be useful if he knew enough of the related subjects to make it interesting. . . . It is unfortunate that Jones thought it necessary to ignore the aesthetic nature of the blues in order to make his ideological point. . . . Much has been made of the fact that *Blues People* is one of the few books by a Negro to treat the subject. Unfortunately for those who expect that Negroes would have a special insight into this mysterious art, this is not enough. Here, too, the critical intelligence must perform the difficult task which only it can perform."

The New Republic, which displays such acuity in political matters, should also maintain its perspective in the arts. Ralph Ellison deserves far better.

David Evanier
New York, New York

Unworthy ally

To the editors:

While reading about "Reagan's African Ally" by Arnaud de Borchgrave and Michael Ledeen (*TNR*, January 17, 1981), I found no mention of Jonas Savimbi's illustrious history. Perhaps a look at that will show what kind of ally he makes.

When Angola's independence war began, Savimbi sided first with one guerrilla army, then another, then China, various African countries, the Portuguese he was supposed to be fighting, and finally South Africa. One

(continued on page 40)

The editors welcome correspondence from TNR's readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number, should be typed double-spaced, and held to under 200 words. Longer letters may be abridged due to lack of space.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

February 7, 1981

Don't Turn the Page Yet

By no means do we wish to dampen the joy that Americans felt and showed in welcoming our 52 hostages back from Iran. We share everyone's happiness at their safe return. Still, it's useful to examine why America exploded with celebration and made the ex-hostages into heroes. One reason is that the hostage release was a liberation for the whole country. Because television and the Carter administration made the hostages and their families the major focus of our national attention for 14 months, and because all of our hopes for their freedom were repeatedly raised and dashed, how could we help but jump for joy when finally the tension was released?

But why did television and the Carter administration seize upon the hostages so, and why did the country respond as it did? Television is rightly being bombarded with criticism for overplaying the hostage story, with turning an international crime into a soap opera, with force-feeding the country on emotions while (in most cases) denying us the information and historical perspective needed to evaluate the crisis. But television didn't manufacture the nation's underlying values. This is a country that cherishes individual human life and freedom, and it is also a country hungry for heroes. The hostages, as they acknowledged, were not heroes. They were public servants who endured hardship and survived. They were elevated to hero status out of our need to witness heroism, especially American heroism. Television and the American consciousness fastened onto the embassy seizure, too, because it was a symbolic event in American history—concrete evidence of our vulnerability to attack by the thugs of this world and of our seeming inability to respond forcefully in the classic American tradition.

To give President Carter his due, he did not take the advice of belligerent columnists and armchair strategists who counseled going to war the minute the hostages were taken, believing that was the sole way to preserve America's honor. Had Carter done as they demanded, the hostages surely would have been killed and Iran might have been driven to ally itself with Russia. Some of Carter's critics, almost all of them supporters of Ronald Reagan, act almost sorry that the hostages survived. Fortunately, Reagan is a better man than many of his backers.

So Jimmy Carter deserves credit for not taking the worst advice available, but not for much more. The basic flaw in the Carter approach was the same one that plagued his diplomacy for four long years—a bottomless innocence about the world. Earnest he was, and Carter achieved success when tenacity was the needed ingredient, as at Camp David, when two nations of fundamental goodwill needed a tireless go-between to help them achieve something they otherwise couldn't. But there was no goodwill on Iran's side, only confusion and malevolence. America needed a strategist smart enough to see the fruitlessness of talking with Iranians who lacked power to act and tough enough to squeeze Iranians who had power.

Bargaining with Bani-Sadr and Ghotbzadeh was a waste of time and effort, yet Carter frantically pursued them for months. Instead, shortly after the hostages were taken, the minute it was clear that they were being held with the Ayatollah Khomeini's blessing, Carter should have set a deadline after which the United States would refuse to negotiate. If the deadline had passed, Carter should have declared the hostages to be prisoners of war and told Iran they would be useless as bargaining material. But he should have made it clear that harm to the hostages would be punished severely.

As it turned out, it was a deadline that got the hostages out—the January 20 deadline for inauguration of a new president whose terms Iran had every reason to believe would be less favorable than Carter's. If Carter had been reelected, the hostages probably still would be in captivity, as Iran tried to wheedle more

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money and concessions out of Carter.

The contrasts between Carter and Reagan were apparent even in their welcoming speeches to the hostages. Carter, in Wiesbaden, was moralistic, self-congratulatory, and petty-minded all at once. He had to discuss the minutiae of negotiations and tell the hostages how much Iran wanted and how little we gave. He had to tell the rest of us how they cheered him. And as usual he exaggerated with the abandon of one who is either utterly ignorant of history or who is utterly disingenuous. The Iranians, he said, were guilty of a "despicable act of savagery" and "acts of barbarism," conjuring up images of Idi Amin's torture chambers. "Our nation has been united as perhaps never before in history," he said, and he called the hostages "true heroes." By contrast, Reagan issued a low-key "welcome home" coupled with a warning to the world's terrorists that henceforth the United States will respond to international thuggery with "swift and effective retribution."

We share Reagan's hope that the former hostages now will "turn the page and look ahead." But the US government should not turn the page just yet. Before contemplating the future, Congress and the executive branch should reread the last several chapters.

For example, we should consider why the shah fell and whether we might have done more to preserve a friendly government in Iran. A good case can be made that the Nixon administration began the shah's downfall by encouraging him to recreate the Persian empire and to spend tens of billions of dollars on military hardware, thereby inflating his economy and cutting him off from the more mundane aspirations of his people. Some Iran experts now think that the shah's harsh anti-inflationary price controls policy in 1977 is what triggered unemployment, anger, and serious revolutionary activity in Iran.

It's clear the United States knew too little about what was happening in Iran. By agreement with the shah, American intelligence took its information from Savak and had no independent sources. Too few of our diplomats spoke Farsi and too many spent their time hobnobbing with pro-shah Iranian elites, rather than with bazaaris, mullahs, and students. No one in US intelligence or the diplomatic service knew that the shah was suffering from cancer until after his downfall, even though his illness may have contributed greatly to his inability to handle the rebellion against him.

The American press was no better. Even in the crisis year 1978, the major networks averaged less than one story per week on Iran. The *Washington Post* acknowledged that even it carried only 134 articles on Iran that year, compared with 916 in 1980.

What should US policy have been when the shah got into trouble with his own people? Should we have encouraged a coup by the military? Instead of the conflicting messages emanating from Washington, it seems clear now that we should have given the shah maximum political support and let Iran's military do as it wished. We gained no favor with Khomeini by equivocating, and most of the shah's generals were executed in spite of their restraint.

Should the US have let the shah enter this country after his downfall? Should we have closed down our embassy and told US nationals to leave Iran, as Anwar Sadat did for Egypt? In fact, at first Carter did say the shah was welcome to visit, if not stay here, but he changed his mind after the shah first went to Egypt, then to Morocco (where he was hustled out by a nervous King Hassan), and then to the Bahamas (which charged him $150,000 per week for refuge), and finally to Mexico.

Why did Carter finally let the shah in? Was it because of pressure from Henry Kissinger and David Rockefeller? If so, what sort of pressure? Or was it because Carter was fooled about the seriousness of the shah's illness? The US ambassador in Iran, William Sullivan, cabled Carter that "if you let in the shah, I'll be coming home in a pine box." Yet Carter believed Iranian officials who assured him they could and would maintain security at our embassy. Why?

Before turning the page on the Iran crisis, we ought to know the answers to such questions. We also should get clear just how badly the hostages were treated, what negotiating attempts were made, and what alternatives were available. There needn't be partisan recriminations, because presidents of both parties seem to have made errors in Iran. We should examine what they were in order to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

The fine print in the hostage deal.

Hostages of the Banks

On January 12 Tehran's *Kayhan* newspaper headlined: "It's Over! The Great Satan Bows to All Our Conditions." A little more than a week later, Jimmy Carter told the released hostages, "I froze $11 billion and we gave them back less than three billion dollars." The truth, caught between the Iranians and Jimmy Carter, was a crushed petal. The ex-president said the deal was simple: the Iranians gave us back our hostages, and we gave them back their money. A look at the fine print tells a more interesting story.

In the last stages of the negotiations, it was disclosed that a dozen major American banks had been meeting secretly in New York with lawyers representing Iran. On January 15, the banks made their "last and best offer" to Iran. Most of the bankers and their lawyers then moved to the State Department in Washington, where the final deal was struck after long meetings on Friday and Saturday. Our official government, the

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The Siege of Wiesbaden

Wiesbaden, West Germany

The poor former American hostages —or "returnees," as the State Department liked to call them. Here they were, supposedly safe at last inside the gates of the US Air Force hospital here. But just outside, there was the pushing and shoving and shouting that might have reminded them of a certain day about 450 days ago. The battalions of the American press and television wanted something—anything—to send back home. And they outnumbered the hostages by 20 or 30 to one. It probably took the former captives (finding an alternative for "ex-hostage" was the major literary challenge of the story) a while to realize that they were in control. Though they were behind the fence, we were the animals of the zoo, waiting for any scraps the folks inside were willing to throw our way.

Most of the civility of the press was displayed toward its own members. You never knew for sure which hospital gate a former hostage might approach for a press feeding. A reporter who had been freezing for hours at one gate might journey off on a walk to another one, only to discover that a jogging ex-hostage or an ex-hostage on his way to the dentist had dropped by the reporter's old position. Furious, the reporter would return and get a "fill" from one of his comrades, who knew perfectly well the same might have happened to him.

Photographers and television people, hough, couldn't get a "fill" for that evening's action news. You get it live or you don't get it. If you were a lucky local affiliate, your network could take care of you. But if you were a local and one of "your" hostages—defined roughly as anyone who had ever lived in your viewing area—had made the advance, relying on the network was not your preference, or that of your boss back home.

There were all sorts of rumors about how many hostage families had been "bought off" by the networks for staggering sums of money. Print folks, already slightly unsteady from lack of sleep and around-the-clock deadlines caused by the six-hour time difference, wondered who next among their sources might fall prey to the networks' frightful treasuries. We were suffering from what doctors examining the hostages might have described as "Wiesbaden syndrome."

My assignment for the first two days was to follow around a 19-year-old woman named Allyssa Keough. Allyssa Keough decided to come see her father here, former hostage William Keough, despite the State Department's request that hostage families wait back in the US. It was quite in keeping with what she had done for the last 14 months. She had been outspoken, often critical of the government, and still liked Iranians—though her warmth, she insisted in the face of a lot of hate mail, did not extend to the ayatollah or his militants.

She learned a lot about reporters in her 14 months with them, and said she wanted to be one of them one day. In a way, she already was. She was here in a hotel lobby being interviewed by ABC, there in Frankfurt trying to call her father while the cameras hummed behind her; a television crew took her to the hospital for an attempt to see her dad, then filmed her failing to get in. She acted as her own press secretary, and a skilled one. She sat in her room with one group of reporters while others camped out on the floor outside. She determined the order of battle, commanding people in and out like a field marshal. Watching Allyssa leaf through telephone messages was like watching a successful poker player examine a hand, deciding what was worth keeping and what should be thrown away.

The justification for pursuing her was that Allyssa might learn a lot from her father, which she'd then pass on to us. When she did, finally, get to see her dad (no press) he told her to repeat nothing, and she followed orders. Trained by her 14 months as a star, she resisted all manner of probes by all manner of probers—10 hours of questioning by militant journalists. "I love him, he loves me" became Allyssa's name, rank, and serial number.

Ask any reporters here, and you're likely to get an equally disgruntled account. Which is simply the practiced, cynical, journalistic way of hiding the fact that we all loved being here.

E. J. Dionne

E. J. Dionne is a reporter for the *New York Times*.

Carter administration, gave the appearance of a harassed middleman trying to oversee a deal between the Iranians and the banks. In a way, that had been reality from the beginning.

On November 14, 1979, 10 days after the hostages were taken, Bani-Sadr announced that Iran would withdraw all its deposits in US banks. After about $200 million had been transferred from US banks to Japanese branches in London, President Carter froze the accounts. Carter's order declaring a national emergency found an "extraordinary threat to the . . . economy of the United States." An accompanying statement said, "The purpose of this order is to insure that claims on Iran by the United States and its citizens are provided for in an orderly manner." A few months later, in a report to Congress, Carter explained that "Iran had threatened suddenly to withdraw its assets from United States banks, to refuse to accept payment in dollars for oil, and to repudiate obligations to the United States and to United States nationals." The unnamed "nationals," who were about to have their claims repudiated, were the 12 major US banks, which had loaned about five billion dollars to the Iranians.

These extravagant loans, made in the boom times of the shah's westernization program, had looked perilous ever since the ayatollah's return. The ayatollah repudiated the shah's programs, he repudiated the Great American Satan, and he surely would have repudiated the Great Satan's loans. The only question was when. The American banks were not worried, though, because they also had huge Iranian deposits, about $4.8 billion in European branches and about two billion dollars in the US. If the Iranians defaulted on the loans, the banks could take the money in the depos-

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its to pay themselves. They called it "set-off" and its great advantage was that you didn't have to go to court to do it, or try to enforce an American court judgment on a foreign government—you just took the money.

The problem was that you can't set off until there is a default, and the Iranians were not in default. The banks knew perfectly well that the ayatollah would never pay off the loans, but he hadn't said so yet. Bani-Sadr understood that the only way to defeat a set-off is to withdraw your deposits before defaulting. But Bani-Sadr's technique was faulty: you are not supposed to announce your intention to withdraw, you are supposed to just do it.

When a bank account is frozen, the US Treasury must give a license before any money can be taken out of it. So the first effect of the freeze was to force the Iranians into default on their loans, since they suddenly had no dollars to make the interest payments. On the same day President Carter froze the Iranian assets, the Treasury issued a regulation licensing the banks to set off the frozen assets against defaulted Iranian loans. So the second effect of the freeze was to guarantee the banks that they'd recover their loans to Iran and to give them use of the Iranian funds for the duration of the crisis.

The banks took the set-off funds, apparently about five billion dollars, and loaned them out on the Eurocurrency market at prevailing rates, somewhere around 17 to 18 percent. It was, in essence, an interest-free loan to the banks, which would profit about one billion dollars a year for as long as the crisis continued.

THE CARTER administration, by allowing the banks to set off, lost control of the situation along with the money. The banks became a strong player with an interest in prolonging the crisis. As long as the hostages were held, the banks could enjoy their interest-free loan. If the crisis ended, they would have to come up with the five billion dollars. (As it turns out, the agreement required the banks to pay the Iranians interest to the end of 1980; but the rate was not specified and they paid no interest on the interest they actually earned.)

In order to be fair, the administration had to do something for other Americans who had claims against Iran. So they were licensed to proceed with their claims in American courts. Before the end, about 300 suits were filed with claims of $8.5 billion. These suits became a small legal industry, with its own bi-weekly newsletter which usually ran 100 pages. The Carter administration, having authorized these suits, did its best to stall them by presenting judges with secret affidavits alleging that any progress in the litigation might hurt delicate negotiations with Iran. As part of the Iran settlement, the US agreed to "terminate all litigation" against Iran. The claimants were told their licenses to proceed in US courts were revoked, and that they could present their claims to a new international tribunal, yet to be created. In all likelihood no one will go to this kangaroo court, and those who do will get what they deserve. Ultimately, if anyone pays off these claims against Iran, it will be the US taxpayers. Someone might call it ransom.

While the Iranians were immunized against the American legal system, even from claims by the hostages, Carter agreed not only to keep our courts open to them, but to guarantee enforcement of Iranian decrees in the US. The taxpayers, assured that the great swap will not cost them a dime, have not yet been told about this fantastic provision. Section 14 of the agreement provides that: "Iranian decrees and judgments relating to such assets [those of the late shah or any close relative] should be enforced by US courts in accordance with United States law." And Section 15 provides: "As to any judgment of a US court which calls for transfer of any property or assets to Iran, the United States hereby guarantees the enforcement of the final judgment."

ALTHOUGH it is hard to believe, the agreement apparently sets up the following four steps into the US Treasury: (1) the Iranians proceed in their own courts and get a $10 billion judgment against the shah or a close relative. (2) They bring that decree to the US where our courts must enforce it. (3) The judgment will be returned unsatisfied since the shah's family has prudently removed its wealth from US jurisdiction. (4) Then the United States government enters with its "guarantee" and pays off the judgment. In short, we have agreed to pay whatever they can dream up. It was a new kind of ransom where you agreed to pay the kidnapper whatever he might want in the future. Here, clearly, President Reagan will have to do some repudiating. Maybe we can argue lack of capacity—if I signed that contract, I must have been crazy.

Mullahs and revolutionary fervor, spiritually satisfying though they might be, have destroyed the Iranian economy. By last summer the country was on permanent holiday, factories were idle, and oil production was only about 20 percent of what it had been. Huge monthly deficits were rapidly depleting the foreign reserves left by the shah. In May 1980 there was seven or eight billion dollars left in unblocked accounts, and the government had to withdraw $750 million of foreign reserves to pay for food and other imports. In January 1981, before Carter bailed them out, the Iranians were down to about a four-month supply of cash.

Without American aid, the ayatollah's revolution faced imminent starvation. Jimmy Carter saved it. The unfrozen money probably will net out to about four billion dollars for Iran. The gold is worth about one billion dollars. In sum, it seems the United States has financed the Iranian revolution for another half a year or more.

Many Americans were concerned that the agreement would free up $500-600 million worth of arms which Iran had paid for, but which we had not delivered when the crisis began. The deal makes a bow to

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sentiment about arms sales. Although not part of the formal agreement, the understanding is that the US will at least refund the money, so the Iranians can go buy the arms from someone else.

The prize for the most degrading provision ever signed by an American government probably goes to section 13 of the agreement:

> The United States will order all persons within US jurisdiction to report to the US Treasury, within 30 days, for transmission to Iran, all information known to them [concerning the shah's assets]. . . . Violations of the requirement will be subject to civil and criminal penalties described by US law.

So even though the agreement with the banks has not been made public, the essence of the hostage swap is fairly clear. In the noontide of the Pahlavi regime, America's leading banks loaned about five billion dollars to Iran. Those loans became worthless when the ayatollah's revolution took over. A tremendous loss was about to fall on the banks, possibly one they could not withstand. The freeze was necessary to prevent an immediate loss. The banks then turned pending disaster into a profit by setting off the Iranian deposits and loaning them out. Fourteen months later, the hostage agreement made the banks whole on their bad loans. Everybody could not be made whole, because you had to give the Iranians something back. Non-bank claimants were directed to the shiny new tribunal, a bad joke. More likely, the non-bank claimants will appeal to Congress for relief. Particularly in view of the preference given to the banks, the claims will be hard to resist. The taxpayer ultimately will have to pick up the tab. The banks had effectively shifted the loss from themselves to the taxpayer. The hostages provided an emotional cover.

William J. Quirk

William J. Quirk, who teaches law at the University of South Carolina, writes often for *TNR* on financial matters.

How the media connived at America's humiliation.

Hostages of Television

The carnival that America has made of the return of the hostages reminds one of Ortega y Gasset's haunting remark that it is idle to look to America for the powers of command because it has not yet suffered. As the NBC reporter waited at Frankfurt airport in the early hours of Wednesday, he tried to explain why the Germans did not share the American excitement. The Europeans may have been sympathetic from the beginning about the personal plight of the hostages, but they never have thought that the lives of 52 men and women should weigh very heavily in a great power's calculations.

There are many Americans who agree, but it is not their attitude that has prevailed. If the terms to which America has agreed for the release of the hostages are ignominious, that humiliation is the result mainly of the fuss that has been made about them from the beginning. The blame must be placed first on Jimmy Carter. He manipulated the hostages as symbols: he would not light the nation's Christmas tree, he would not leave the White House, until they had been released. It was the final irony for a distraught man that, when they were released at last, he had no choice about leaving the White House. He had already been kicked out of it half an hour earlier.

But the most persistent and irresponsible manipulators of the symbol were the press, and especially television. No sooner could one be grateful that CBS Evening News would no longer end with Walter Cronkite's "And that's the way it is on this, the 443rd day of captivity . . . ," than the "Today Show" on NBC seized the initiative and began to count again: "On the fourth day of freedom for the hostages. . . ." There is a book waiting to be written called *The Selling of the Hostages*: 14 months of media hype which could lead only to national humiliation in the end.

Television in fact played straight into the hands of the militants in Tehran. It is all very well to dismiss them as hoodlums and punks. But they also are children of the media age. From start to finish, they watched how American television reported the story, and exploited it themselves. We ought to get used to the fact that there is not a guerrilla or an urban terrorist across the world today who will not seek out Barbara Walters if she can be of service. From Bogota to Botswana to Baluchistan, the mutter is heard over the carbines and the grenades: "The time has come to use Barbara." They are all Abbie Hoffmans in their cunning.

All of the original 66 hostages were in the public service of their country. Whether in the foreign service or in the US Marines, all of them undertook their assignments knowing the risks. In any event, they were all released, with no more harm done to them,

(continued on page 11)

American Heritage

'Go Back? Only in a B52'

Freed American Voices Pride in U.S. Heritage

—*The Washington Post*, January 24, 1981

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The Ambassador's Lot

The excerpts below are from The History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire, *written and published in 1675 by Paul Rycaut, who had served as the secretary to the British ambassador to the Sultan and who was himself consul in Smyrna. The text is a classic for students of Middle Eastern culture and values. While it is based specifically on Rycaut's experience among the Turks, it is really a work about the political culture of Moslem nations. Suffice it to say that the Turks, having experienced a secular revolution, no longer behave as they did 300 years ago. Some of their neighbors still do. Rycaut's advice, therefore, merits attention.*—**M.P.**

There was no Nation in the World ever so barbarous, that did not acknowledge the Office of an Embassadour sacred and necessary. . . .

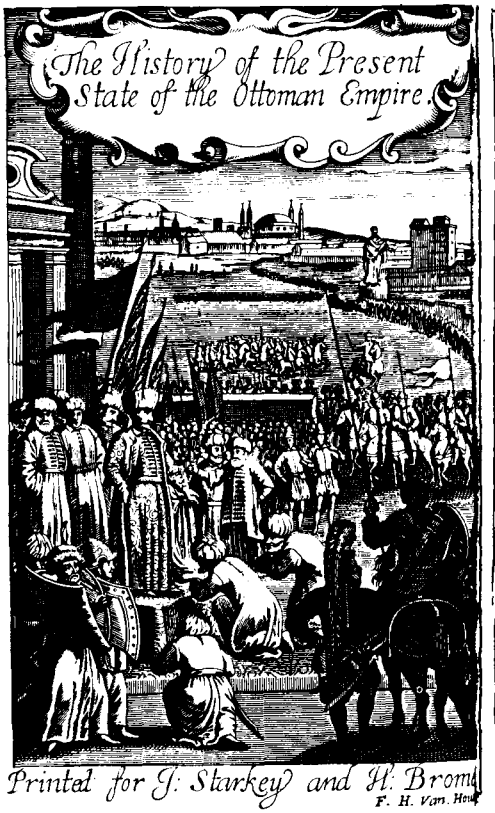
But though the *Turks* make these outward demonstrations of all due reverence and religious care to preserve the persons of Embassadours sacred and free from violence; yet it is apparent by their treatment and usage towards them, in all emergencies and differences between the Prince they come from, and themselves, that they have no esteem of the Law of Nations, or place any Religion in the maintenance of their Faith. . . .

The reason of this irreverent carriage in the *Turks* towards the persons of Embassadours, contrary to the custom of the ancient *Romans*, and other gallant and civilized people, is an apprehension and Maxim they have received, that an Embassadour is indued with two qualifications; one, of representing to the Grand Signior the desires of his Prince, the breach of Articles or League, the aggrievances and abuses of Merchants trading in his Dominions, that so satisfaction and amendment may be made: And the other, that he remains in nature of a Hostage, called by themselves *Mahapous* or pledge; by which he becomes responsible for what is acted by his Prince contrary to the Capitulations of Peace, and remains for a pawn for the faithful and sincere carriage of his Nation. . . .

Nor hath this Law of Nations, to the sacred esteem of Embassadours, found better observation towards the representatives of the *German* Emperour, who have upon all conjunctures of Discord and Breaches of Peace between those two powerful Princes, been subject to confinements and custody of a Guard, nothing differing from formal imprisonments; or else, as it hapned to the *German* Resident in the last War, are transported from place to place, according to the motion of the Armies, as a barbarous Trophy in the time of their prosperous successes, and as a means at hand to reconcile and mediate when evil Fortune compels them to composition. . . .

An Embassadour in this Court ought to be circumspect and careful to avoid the occasion of having his honour blemished, or of incurring the least violation of his person; for afterward, as one baffled in his reputation, he becomes scorned, loses his power and interest, and all esteem of his worth and wisdom; for having endured one affront, their insolence soon presumes farther to trespass on his patience: for certainly *Turks* of all Nations in the world, are most apt to crush and trample on those that lie under their feet; as on the contrary, those who have a reputation with them, may make the best and most advantageous treats of any part of the world. . . . To reply according to the Pride and Ignorance of a *Turk*, is properly to blow up fire into a flame; to support with submission and a pusillanimous spirit, his affronts and indignities, by negotiating faintly or coldly, is to add fuel and wood to the burning piles; but solid reason and discourse, accompanied with chearful expressions, vivacity and courage in argument, is the only manner of dealing and treating with the *Turks*. That which is called good nature or flexible disposition, is of little use to a publick Minister in his treaty with *Turks*: a punctual adherence to former customs and examples even to obstinacy, is the best and fastest rule, for the concession of one point serves to embolden them to demand another, and then a third; and so their hopes increase with the success, having no modesty nor wisdom to terminate their desires; one act or two of favour is enough afterwards to introduce a custom (which is the chiefest part of their Law) and to make that which is meerly voluntary, and of grace to become of obligation.

. . . . It hath been known, that the Embassadour hath been forced to interpose his own Person between the fury of the Visier and his Interpreter, whose offence was only a delivery of the words of his Master; some of whom have notwithstanding been imprisoned, or executed for this cause. . . .



THE
HISTORY
Of the present
STATE
OF THE
Ottoman Empire.
CONTAINING
The Maxims of the Turkish Polity, the most material Points of the Mahometan Religion, their *Sects* and *Heresies*, their *Convents* and *Religious Votaries*.
Their Military Discipline, With an exact Computation of their Forces both by *Land* and *Sea*.
Illustrated with divers Pieces of Sculpture representing the variety of Habits amongst the *Turks*.
IN THREE BOOKS.
By PAUL RYCAUT Esq;
Late Secretary to his Excellency the Earl of *Winchilsea*, (Embassadour Extraordinary for His Majesty *Charles* II. &c. to *Sultan Mahomet Han* the Fourth, Emperour of the *Turks*) now Consul of *Smyrna*, and Fellow of the *Royal Society*.
The Fourth Edition.
LONDON,
Printed for *John Starkey* and *Henry Brome*, 1675.

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perhaps less so, than to any prisoners of war. They were treated better than the Iranian government treats Iranian prisoners. Although they have suffered and deserve our sympathy, by no stretch of the vocabulary are they heroes.

Jimmy Carter listened to their stories, and called their captors barbaric. Then what word does he hold in reserve to describe Pol Pot? Ronald Reagan lets it be known that he is outraged at the hostages' treatment. Then what feeling remains with which he can respond to some genuine atrocity? The American hostages did not suffer atrocity. Renata Adler wrote in the introduction to a collection of her essays on the 1960s that it seemed that we could now respond to events only on a single level of outrage. The outrage at the treatment of the hostages is as meretricious as the joy at their release.

At the British embassy in Washington today is one of the diplomats who was detained in the seizure of the British mission to Peking in 1967. On August 22 about 10,000 Chinese participants in the Cultural Revolution entered the compound of the mission, prevented the staff from leaving, and set fire to and sacked the chancery building, which was completely destroyed. When the staff eventually tried to leave, they were physically attacked and beaten by the demonstrators. A detachment of the Chinese army, which had been present all the time, then rounded up the diplomats and took them into custody. On August 30 the demonstrators again took charge. The staff were obliged to appear publicly. When the chargé d'affaires refused to abase himself, he was assaulted by the militants, and the army again stepped in and took the diplomats into custody. They were held under compound arrest for 15 months. The diplomat in Washington expects to be posted to China again.

This is one of several incidents told in the new edition of *Satow's Guide to Diplomatic Practice*. This new edition of what is the bible of diplomacy has two instructive chapters on "Attacks on Embassies" and "Kidnapping of Diplomats." The new *Satow* is quite clear about the limits to the sense of grievance that the affronted nation should feel, the limits to the actions it can and should take, and the redress it later can and should seek. There has been considerable evidence that members of the US Foreign Service have understood these limits better than most other Americans.

There was always very little that America could do to obtain the release of the hostages. It should have just sat out the crisis, and expected the hostages to do the same. They probably would have been released earlier that way, as Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale, himself a prisoner of war in Hanoi for eight years, argued last week in the *Washington Post*. If the improbable had happened and they had been executed, that would have been odious, but they simply would have been among the casualties of history. It is impossible for the allies of America to believe that it even yet has the powers of command if it will not bear such casualties without what the *Washington Star* has called "Yellow Ribbon Strategy."

The *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* also began to express less direct doubts about the fuss made of the hostages. The editorial in the *Times* had the headline: "The Week of the Split Screen." It was right on target. No one who watched television on inauguration day can have failed to be mesmerized by such a virtuoso display of the possibilities of satellite television. As the pictures on the screen flashed from the White House to Tehran to the Capitol to Athens to Plains to Algiers to Kansas to Frankfurt, we were in the thrall of symbols. And once again America will push aside the fact that it has suffered an ignominious defeat as a great power incapable of counting and accepting the awful costs and casualties of leadership.

Henry Fairlie

On the Hill

The First 100 Bills

The House of Representatives is not neglecting its solemn mandate to streamline big government. By the end of January 5, the first day of the current session, legislators had filled "the hopper" with legislative solutions to the problem. No fewer than 40 of the first 100 bills (there were 780 in all that day) proposed ways to reduce the federal burden. Nearly half of these were tax relief measures. Few of these bills are likely to reach the House or Senate floor. Most will remain, in the legislative jargon, "in the hopper" till the end of the session, quietly forgotten. HR 65, for instance, would "reaffirm the fact that benefits payable [under the Social Security Act] are exempt from all taxation." Why reaffirm what has already been affirmed? To quiet those constituents who imagine that an IRS regulation of 1939 and a resolution passed in the last session will be reversed. Two bills calling for tax deductions for private school tuition, HR 89 and HR 90, are identical right down to the title and the name of the sponsor, John Ashbrook, Repubican of Ohio. Ashbrook also submitted a third bill, HR 92, which calls for the tuition tax deduction *again*, adding only that gifts or contributions to colleges would be deductible as well (which they already are).

Superfluity is not limited to those bills that address the problem of big government. HR 18, for instance, would establish a Commission on More Efficient Government, "with the declared objective of improving the quality of government in the United States and of restoring public confidence at all levels." If successful, will the commission then be assigned the tasks of ending the arms race and balancing the budget? HR 26

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would shift the Institute of American Indian Arts from the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs to the Department of the Interior's Indian Arts and Crafts Board. Perhaps the Indian Arts and Crafts Board has a nicer view. Representative Frank Annunzio, Democrat of Illinois, sponsored HR 33, which would grant a federal charter to the Italian-American War Veterans of the United States, and HR 34, which would increase the number of visas available to immigrants from what the bill coyly refers to as "certain foreign countries." Annunzio's office says he has Ireland in mind. There is an abundance of such commission-making, office-shuffling, and patronage in the first 100 bills of the 97th Congress. The hopper is just brimming with fresh ideas.

The hopper, for the uninitiated, really exists. It is a big wooden box attached to the House Speaker's rostrum. A representative who wishes to introduce a bill walks up the aisle to the hopper and drops a copy in. The House clerk verifies the signature on the bill and passes it to the Speaker, who in turn passes it to the House parliamentarian. The parliamentarian writes one or more committee assignments on the bill and passes it back to the bill clerk. The bill clerk numbers the bill and sends it to the Government Printing Office. The Government Printing Office prints several copies of the bill and sends them to the document room, which distributes the copies to the sponsoring legislator, to the assigned committees, and to federal depository libraries around the country.

The odds against any randomly chosen bill being passed on the House floor at the end of this process—let alone becoming law—are nearly insurmountable. The House passed about 600 bills in the last Congress; more than 8,000 had been introduced. Some legislators may find this discouraging, but to many others these odds are a distinct advantage. Take a bill like HR 52, introduced by James Oberstar, a Democrat-Farmer-Labor representative from Minnesota. HR 52 is a bill to incorporate the US Submarine Veterans of World War II. This is probably not the sort of cause that the majority of voters in Minnesota's eighth district sent Oberstar to Washington to fight for. But it is what a lot of World War II submarine veterans expect Oberstar to fight for. Oberstar now can send a copy of the bill, which he has been dropping into the hopper for years, to representatives of that interest group, and get on to more serious business. Bills still "in the hopper" at the end of each Congress die and must be reborn, which is why the first day is always the busiest one for introducing legislation.

The confidentiality of the representative-interest group relationship is protected by House procedures. Sure, a troublemaking citizen might go to the House document room and ask to see all the House bills introduced in a given legislative session. But the government has regulations to protect the document room from that sort of fishing expedition. Only six bills per day are allowed to each document room visitor. Fifteen are allowed on written requests. Muckrakers curious about who has introduced what are thus driven to wading through the Congressional Record (not recommended) or getting a computer printout from the House legislative information service. Alas, these printouts can be exasperatingly uninformative, since they list only sponsor, date introduced, committee assignment, and title. Consider HR 1, the very first bill of 1981, introduced by Representative Joe Moakley, Democrat of Massachusetts. The official title:

> A bill to make regulations more cost-effective, to ensure periodic review of old rules, to improve regulatory planning and management, to eliminate needless formality and delay, to enhance public participation in the regulatory process, to establish a select committee of the House of Representatives to conduct investigations of Federal Agency rules, to establish procedures for congressional review of agency rules, and for other purposes.

Titles like these are terrific advertisements for legislation because they speak not of means (which might cause some disagreement) but of an end (which everyone generally favors). "And for other purposes" is the refrain of these printouts, a useful phrase to title-writers who might otherwise go on and on and actually give away the gist.

JUDGING from the first 100 bills, the greatest legislative activist in the House is John Ashbrook, who weighed in with 40. Among the 780 bills the first day, there may be more than 40 from one or more of Ashbrook's colleagues. Still, Ashbrook's achievement shows that he can sprint to the hopper faster than his more prolific colleagues. According to the 1980 *Almanac of American Politics*, Ashbrook is " by any measure one of the most conservative members of the House," a man whose political career "is almost a catalogue of lost causes." In 1972 Ashbrook challenged Richard Nixon for the Republican nomination because he objected to wage and price controls and relations with the People's Republic of China. Ashbrook failed to win 10 percent of the vote in any primary or a single delegate vote at the convention. Ashbrook's record, says the *Almanac*, "is a continual triumph of idealism over practicality, of principle over effectiveness."

Ashbrook's bills tend to stay in the hopper (only metaphorically) not by cynical design but by their reactionary extremism (though in the present conservative political climate they seem less extreme every day). HR 88, for instance, would exempt from participation in the Social Security program "members of religious faiths which oppose participation in such a program." Ashbrook says he is thinking of the Amish: "It's a matter of principle to them," he says. But it wouldn't be long before it became a matter of principle to members of newer "religions" as well, or was rediscovered as a tenet by members of the older faiths. Ashbrook is also strongly opposed to gun control. HR 71 calls for repeal of the Gun Control Act of 1968. In

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case that one won't go, Ashbrook has also dropped HR 69 in the hopper. HR 69 calls only for the exemption of ammunition from the act. "Anywhere you go now, you have to sign for ammunition," sighs Ashbrook, "and every infraction of the 1968 act is a felony."

Whatever Ashbrook's reasons, his strategy in introducing and reintroducing such bills, as he does the first day of each new session, is simple. "The legislative process is such that you must wear people down by bringing bills back again and again." Ashbrook calls it "a ritual all of us go through for the things we believe in, or the things that would benefit our districts."

Timothy Noah

Timothy Noah is a former *TNR* summer intern.

What's sauce for the CIA isn't sauce for the FBI.

Independent Agents

Although almost nobody noticed, the incoming Reagan administration has just handed an important victory to the FBI, one its agents and high-ranking officials have wanted for nearly a decade. Several weeks ago the Reagan staff announced that the new president will not install his own FBI director, but will leave the current director, William H. Webster, on the job. Webster thus becomes virtually the only top-level federal official appointed by President Carter who will serve the Reagan administration. By allowing Webster to continue in office, the Reagan people seem to have established, once again, the principle that the FBI's leadership does not change hands after presidential elections. This principle was in doubt during the 1970s. The FBI, in other words, will not be subjected to the sort of immediate political control and direction that other agencies of the federal government must soon confront. Instead, it will be regarded once again, as it was in the days of J. Edgar Hoover, as a semi-autonomous organization.

Consider, by contrast, the situation at the nation's other leading intelligence agency, the CIA. Out in Langley, Virginia, the expectation seems to be that the CIA director should clean off his desk as soon as the president who appointed him retires or is defeated. President Carter found a college classmate, Admiral Stansfield Turner, to take charge of the CIA in 1977. Now Reagan has picked his former campaign director, attorney William Casey—the sort of guy a president used to name as his attorney general—to be CIA director. While the FBI director is supposed to be an independent fellow, it seems, the CIA director is now supposed to be part of the president's foreign policy "team." This is a new tradition at the CIA and a surprising one. Not even presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon—none of them usually reluctant to assert political authority—tried to replace sitting CIA directors when they took office.

The controversy over presidential control of the FBI began in 1972, when Nixon was in the White House and Hoover was FBI director. That line-up can be viewed as a Mexican stand-off. The cranky, autocratic style of Hoover's final years gave a bad name to the cause of independence for the FBI. Nixon's ham-handed manipulations, on the other hand, gave a bad name to political control of the FBI. When Hoover died, Nixon installed L. Patrick Gray as FBI director and promptly began leaning on him to help the administration cover-up of Watergate. Many FBI officials were outraged, and some of them helped to dig up and reveal the facts that led to Nixon's downfall.

GRAY WAS succeeded as FBI director by Clarence M. Kelley. During the 1976 campaign Jimmy Carter attacked Kelley for what seem in retrospect like relatively minor improprieties, such as allowing FBI workers to build window valances in Kelley's suburban apartment. Carter implied that, unlike President Ford, he might have sacked Kelley on the spot. Kelley was already nearly 65 years old, and he might have been expected to step aside quickly when Carter won. Instead, shortly after the election, Kelley appeared before 350 Washington-based FBI supervisors and announced he would stay on as director through the end of 1977, in order to prevent the FBI from becoming "politicized." Kelley told the agents that if he retired at the beginning of 1977, he might set a precedent under which a new FBI director would be appointed every time a new party took control of the White House. President Carter and his attorney general, Griffin Bell, went along with the year-long delay, in part because they were having trouble finding a suitable replacement for Kelley.

Congress, meanwhile, under the prodding of Senator Robert Byrd, passed a law setting a 10-year term of office for the FBI director. The legislation ostensibly was intended to prevent future J. Edgar Hoovers, by setting a maximum period that FBI directors could serve. The law does not (and probably could not) limit the right of a president to replace his FBI director if he wanted to do so. But in practice, the 1976 law was taken as a signal that FBI directors were meant to have something other than four-year terms. Webster said last summer that he felt the 10-year term set by Congress "suggests an intention that, as long as a director is doing his job, he shouldn't come and go with changes in political administrations."

There does not seem to be any good explanation for the different treatments of the FBI and the CIA, other than bureaucratic politics. CIA officials have not mounted a vigorous campaign for independence, as

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FBI officials have. CIA officials may have decided they are better off being headed by a White House loyalist who can provide political protection during times of controversy.

Logically, keeping the CIA director independent makes at least as much sense as doing so for the head of the FBI. The CIA is supposed to be, primarily, an intelligence-gathering agency, which collects and analyzes information for use by policy-makers. Putting a member of the administration's "team" in charge of the CIA increases the chance that the agency will tell the White House what it wants to hear and sift out the bad news.

The FBI, on the other hand, is a law-enforcement agency, responsible for investigating and helping to prosecute criminal activity. There are a limited number of FBI agents and a finite number of dollars available to enforce the laws, and the question of how the FBI spends its time inevitably raises questions of governmental and social policy. The FBI can give priority to auto thefts and bank robberies, or to white-collar crime, or to terrorist activity, or to counterintelligence, or to any combination of these. The president has as much responsibility for setting national policies on crime as he does for housing, welfare, or energy policy.

Jim Mann

Jim Mann is a Washington reporter for the *Los Angeles Times.*

How to make friends with Mexico.

Bitter Wine

President Reagan's Latin American policy tried out on the road last month in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The local reviews were unfavorable. Last week Jorge Castañeda, Mexico's foreign minister, declared that troubled El Salvador should be left alone "to solve its own problems," lest "the bloodshed become greater and the conflict an international one." This as 25,000 Mexicans marched with banners saying "Yankees, hands off El Salvador." Gustavo Carbajal, head of Mexico's ruling party of the Institutional Revolution, was in Managua where he proclaimed "Nicaragua is not alone."

In Juarez, both sides were tenaciously vague about the actual content of the talks between the American president-elect and the Mexican president. Recurring vows of friendship rustled the Tortilla Curtain. Gifts were exchanged. From Reagan to Mexican president Lopez Portillo, a gun and a case of Moscatinelli from San Pascual, now of California but once the scene of armed confrontations when manifest destiny was being fulfilled in Mexico's northwest territory. With gentle allusion to that bitter past, Reagan bid Lopez Portillo now to "enjoy the sweetness of the wine of San Pascual." Lopez Portillo gave the future American president a white horse. He did not give away El Salvador.

The heavy symbolism, the *noblesse oblige*, the courtly speeches of the Juarez meeting notwithstanding, the *punto muerte* of its agenda was that death-swept land, regarding which Mexico and the US may have irreconcilable differences. Lopez Portillo had said on many occasions that El Salvador's "social problem" had to be solved before there could be a stable peace. Reagan's attitude: you do not try to fight a civil war and institute reforms at the same time; first you get rid of the war, by winning it. Lopez Portillo had greeted Reagan's election victory with public counsel to "stay out," to "respect the internal processes . . . of grown-up countries capable of self-determination if the hegemonies let them alone. . . ." But Reagan would not stay out, and he was in Juarez to persuade Lopez Portillo to stand aside, to give him a free hand in El Salvador.

That Reagan had come at all, breaking a promise not to visit with foreign leaders before taking office, was eloquent demonstration that Mexico has now become —strategically as well as economically—the cornerstone of US-Latin American policy.

Reagan's courtliness contrasted favorably with Carter's boorish old jokes about "Montezuma's revenge," but the American visitor had more than charm to offer. The US is the number-one creditor, investor, and market for an underemployed, overpopulated, debt-ridden Mexico. Reagan is not burdened, as Carter was, by pressure from the AFL-CIO preventing an agreement to allow Mexican workers "guest worker" status in the United States. The sore points in US-Mexican business affairs, such as the "Tuna War" with San Diego's fishermen, could be eased significantly if our relationship with Mexico could be treated as a major political one—like those with the Soviet Union, the Middle East, or China—in which secondary com-

New Republic Loses Its Voice

Ruby McGowan, "the voice of *The New Republic*," steps down this week after 25 years as *TNR* receptionist. Telephone callers to these offices will miss her distinctive voice and charm, but her fellow staff members will of course miss much more than that.

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mercial interests must give way to overall strategic considerations.

In the days before the Juarez meeting, Reagan's advisers were promising the Mexican press that there would be an end to Carter's practice of delegating relations with Mexico to State Department bureaucrats, "coordinators" with no influence, and politicians rewarded with a sunny Mexican ambassadorship. There was talk of "streamlining" communications with Mexico by shifting ultimate responsibility for Mexican affairs from the State Department to the White House. Allen Zapata, a Reagan spokesman, assured *Excelsior* that "Mr. Reagan has told me that he will take personal charge of his government's policy towards Mexico." The man on the white horse himself will be Mexico's man in Washington.

IN JUAREZ, Reagan did not press his project of a North American common market. Mexico, like Canada, has shown no enthusiasm for relinquishing its own industrial development in exchange for a privileged place as a supplier of oil and other typical third world items.

But Reagan's sweet wine and sweet talk may not get him very far. "We put the feathers aside long ago; we will no longer be awed by strings of glass beads," Lopez Portillo said last spring. The American media to the contrary, Mexico's foreign policy did not gush forth from its new oil wells. It has "historical sources," as Gustavo Carbajal emphasized to me last month in Mexico City. Places like San Pascual are among these sources. In the early 1960s, invoking its venerable "Estrada Doctrine," Mexico stood alone against the OAS boycott of Cuba. Two years before the first of the oil discoveries, President Luis Echeverria began to champion the New International Economic Order, China's admission to the UN, and Allende's Chile.

And the wider horizons of Mexico foreign policy are not a simple braving of the American bull or a new expression of Mexican *machismo*. Lopez Portillo says that Mexico is "a very typical southern country." It still bears the marks of centuries of colonialism and dependence. It remains largely underdeveloped, notwithstanding its desultory urban eruptions, where opulence and squalor mix in the decidedly uneven proportions typical of third world cities. Southern Mexico is a Central American landscape, appalling poverty in high relief, sporadic armed rebellions in low relief. In the past decade nearly every state of the Mexican Republic has seen land invasions by dispossessed peasants. And there is the heavy historical weight of the American presence on its northern border, "a 3,000 kilometer scar," as Lopez Portillo has put it in less cordial moments.

Our southern neighbors are far more conscious of us than we are of them. They watch our TV programs, read translations of our magazines and newspaper articles, catch our movies, produce for our markets and tastes, observe us on vacation. They are acutely aware of what we say and think of them. A recent issue of *Town and Country* devoted to Mexico merited a lengthy comment in a Lopez Portillo press conference.

The utterances of the Reagan transition team on human rights and El Salvador were an almost daily sensation in the Mexican press. Lopez Portillo's warning to the new Reagan administration received enormous popular support. Threats to Central America were felt as threats to Mexico.

Reagan's election was a source of popular concern. The Mexican media, with the inevitable photographs of Reagan in his western sombrero, tended to portray this as the elevation of a cowboy-movie star to the seat of power. And Mexicans are well aware of the role they generally play in such movies. *"Ya se nos llevó a la chingada"* ("Now we're really screwed") was the reaction I heard from some Mexicans. Yet they always added a warning that Mexico would not tolerate another American intervention in Latin America.

Mexican media devote detailed coverage to American discussions of Mexican oil, our frequent calculations as to its potential for satisfying our gluttonous energy habits, our new definitions of the American "strategic territory." From time to time stories of alleged CIA contingency plans to take over Mexican oil wells get blown up in the increasingly influential left press.

ALL THIS accentuates Mexico's ambivalent sense of pride and vulnerability. Its reaction as a "grown-up" third world country is neither to hang around for handouts nor to throw stones through its powerful neighbor's window. Seeking shelter in the world's storm but also seeking to redress the balance in its relations with the US, Mexico has reached out for support to other countries, especially third world countries. Foreign Minister Jorge Castaneda believes there is "an authentic alliance among developing countries."

Gustavo Carbajal of the PRI is the president of the COPPPAL (the Permanent Commission of Latin American Political Parties) which groups nearly all the major liberal and left non-Soviet parties in Latin America. Mexico's leading role in the North-South dialogue and its recent ascent to the Latin American seat on the UN Security Council have made it the respected leader of third world positions in Latin America.

Cautious solidarity has been extended to Central America. Mexico broke relations with Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza only shortly before his downfall, even though the biggest arms shipments to the Sandinistas went by way of Mexico and Sandinista guerrillas trained there. Mexico has maintained proper diplomatic relations with the Salvadoran junta, even including it among recipients of cut-rate oil to Central America and the Caribbean, but meanwhile the Salvadoran opposition has been allowed to use Mexico as the headquarters for its international diplomatic and public relations efforts. Large arms shipments are

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again reported to be flowing south from Mexico.

Mexico has drawn closer to Europe as well. Last spring Lopez Portillo paid visits to Giscard D'Estaing and to the social-democratic leaders of West Germany and Austria. The PRI has upgraded its relations with the Socialist International. Mexico shares the reflex tendency of left-wing European social democrats to see the United States as the main culprit in superpower tensions. This makes pleasant relations with the Soviet bloc appropriate.

OVER THE past year and a half, Mexico and Cuba have grown friendly. Entertaining Fidel Castro in May 1979, Lopez Portillo confided that he considered Castro "one of the great personages of the 20th century." Last spring, when hundreds of thousands of Cubans tried to put some distance between themselves and that great personage, tearing at the veil of mystification and rhetoric that has come to shroud the true situation in Cuba from Latin American eyes, Lopez Portillo provided Castro with opportune political support by announcing a visit to Cuba in the summer. On that visit, he was again effusively complimentary.

Relations with Moscow are also improving. The Soviet press prominently features Lopez Portillo's remarks on the virtues of detente. The Soviets want to convert these honest pleas for a peaceful international environment into support for their post-Afghanistan peace campaign. Nevertheless, Mexico was among the third world countries voting for the United Nations protest against the Soviet invasion.

Lopez Portillo cannot seriously be accused of leftist inclinations. His regime has represented a swing to the right since the heydey of Luis Echeverria's *apertura democratica* of the early 1970s. He has presided over the brutal dismantling of guerrilla bands in Guerrero, and of peasant and student movements in Oaxaca. He has stymied the democratic trade union movement.

The Soviets are not seeking ideological companionship with the Mexican president, and they have no illusions about making Mexico a satellite. The Soviets see the value of Mexican political independence, even if others don't. They want Mexico to be part of the "detentist" forces that would appease Soviet ambitions —beginning by acquiescing to a *fait accompli* in Afghanistan and then, if necessary, in Poland.

American foreign policy moves by fits and starts, sometimes reaching the truth through painful experience, frequently not reaching it at all. The Carter administration lurched us erratically forward toward closer relations with Latin America. With Reagan in the White House and Haig at State, our international policy now faces the great question not of whether but of how to counter the Soviet imperialist advance. Morton Kondracke reported here recently ("Defense Without Mirrors," *TNR*, January 24, 1981) that some unconventional military theorists are questioning the traditional strategy of firepower attrition. Similar unconventional questions must be asked about our political strategy. Is opposition to Soviet expansionism inexorably linked to reliable tyrants, or can links be forged with "the broad alliance of developing nations"?

The Reagan administration is tempted to make El Salvador a demonstration to "wavering" allies that the US will tolerate no further Soviet expansion. El Salvador seems a rudimentary military problem—no far-flung supply lines, no next-door neighbors willing to provide guerrilla sanctuaries. The prospect of a cheap victory is alluring.

Victory, perhaps—temporarily. But not cheap. The prospect in El Salvador is a drawn-out guerrilla struggle. If Reagan tries to up the ante there, it is likely to become a full-scale regional war. Well before that time, Mexico may choose to play its ace—acknowledgment of a "state of belligerence" prior to recognition of a provisional revolutionary government. Ecuador, Panama, France, West Germany, and Austria may well follow suit. America would find itself without allies as it finances, supplies, and "advises" a politically untenable war. As a consequence the Soviet Union, riding a crest of popularity in the third world, would find its way eased to advance on its strategic course.

MEXICO HAS gestured toward the Soviet Union only because it fears us more. That has been the attitude of many third world countries. China, Egypt, Somalia, Cambodia, Eritrea, and Afghanistan have now tasted the bitter wine of Soviet imperialism. Military aid to those third world countries already confronting Soviet aggression makes much more political and strategic sense than adventures in Central America.

A primary Mexican objective attained in the Juarez talks was to establish a "mechanism for joint consultations" before unilateral action is taken by either side in Central America or the Caribbean. Both sides have much to gain from such an arrangement, and much to learn. The Mexicans still don't understand the strategic character of the Soviets' geopolitical advance. The Americans could profit from instruction about Central American reality. As the contending forces wear each other out in El Salvador, the possibilities of a Mexican and Venezuelan initiative leading to a coalition government also could be placed on the agenda. Mexico already has agreed to mediate "should both sides ask for it."

In 1963 Milton Eisenhower, his brother's chief troubleshooter in Latin America, wrote a book called *The Wine Is Bitter*. Today it makes for good Republican education on the purported virtues of "moderately repressive" Latin American dictatorships like those of Perez Jimenez in Venezuela, Batista in Cuba, Pinilla Rojas in Colombia, and Trujillo in the Dominican Republic. With the likes of these tyrants in power, Eisenhower warned, "revolution is inevitable, only the form it takes is uncertain." Since his time those old dictatorships have been deposed, most replaced not by

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Soviet surrogates but by nationalist, relatively democratic, and fiercely independent governments, similar to those in Ecuador and Mexico. Their consistent message to both superpowers has been: stay out.

Milton Eisenhower was quoting Marti: "The wine is bitter but it is our wine." Can a third world nationalism like Mexico's, like Iran's, like Afghanistan's be in harmony with, instead of against, the American national interest? It did so in common struggle against Hitler. It is ready to do so in Afghanistan. In some places in Africa and Asia one can begin to see a similar front forming, now against the Soviet brand of fascism and national oppression.

Robert S. Leiken

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Q. "Can third world radicalism be tempered by more US generosity and understanding?" Haig. "No."

An Interview With Alexander Haig

by Arnaud de Borchgrave and Michael Ledeen

Q: What do you consider America's greatest foreign policy priorities?

Haig: There are three basic ingredients: consistency, reliability, and balance. Balance is somewhat more subtle than the other two. It involves the broad implications of political, military, economic, moral, and security interrelationships. They are all part of a single mosaic and must be managed in accordance with that conception.

These three goals can be accomplished only under the umbrella of confidence in our security capabilities, which are fundamentally threatened today by the eroding East-West balance. So these three basic elements are themselves linked to a fourth, crucial factor: American strength. And I would go beyond that. All these ingredients have to be brought together under a fundamental recognition of interdependence. That means multilateral approaches (which heretofore have not been successful) among all those who share common approaches with us and are threatened by the same forces that concern us.

Q: You mean with all like-minded nations around the world?

Haig: That's right.

Q: If this is the overall rubric, what about some of the other problems that you face at the outset of your tenure?

Haig: One priority is to seek to strengthen and integrate more effectively the Atlantic community of nations so as to really concert our policies. We must go beyond traditional or routine consultation.

Q: At the speed of the slowest ship in the Atlantic convoy?

Haig: Of course not. That pace must be determined by an essential consensus, but not unanimity. We clearly have a continuing urgent problem to deal with the North-South issue in more realistic terms. This is far more complicated than the Atlantic community conception in East-West terms. Each Atlantic nation has a different stake in the outcome of developing nations. So here we have a profound need to do a better job of sharing perceptions and intelligence and information, from which a common set of policies can evolve. Without such sharing, it will be impossible to develop such a consensus. This suggests that we are going to have to do a much better job on the American side.

Q: Some observers of your testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have concluded that the Reagan administration will not attempt any major innovations in foreign policy, but will focus on attempting to restore perceptions of American credibility and dependability. Is this accurate?

Haig: That is an oversimplification. The problem of consistency and the problem of reliability and the problem of balance will demand in some instances very innovative steps. We're not seeking change for change's sake. Yesterday's perceptions don't have to be molded to the conceptions that this administration may or may not have. We have been acting against our own best self-interests. So the most immediate task is to reverse a number of both nuanced and fundamentally sharp departures from actions which would be designed to achieve our basic goals.

For example, when one looks at the past handling of the human rights issue—and here I don't wish to be polemical at all—the functional separation of its treatment from the basic conduct of American foreign policy in a regional sense (done by regional bureaus) has distorted the issue, put in jeopardy the accomplishment of the objective itself, and has had a most deleterious effect upon the conduct of our other affairs with

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both regions and states. To be sure, from time to time it is necessary to focus on extraordinary abuses in a specific situation, thereby relegating other aspects of that situation to a secondary position. I contend that today the greatest area of concern to all free nations is the explosion of international terrorism and associated illegal interventions and wars of so-called national liberation by the Soviet Union and its proxies. I expect to give this issue a higher profile both in terms of our management of it and in the context of overall East-West relations.

Q: President Pertini of Italy recently told a French interviewer that he believed the Red Brigades were guided from outside his country, and he suggested that the terrorist central may lie in an area of the world which wants to see the elimination of Italy as a democratic bridge between Europe and Africa. Many people took him to mean that the Russians and their allies had such an interest, and were involved in such terrorist activities.

Haig: We are terribly concerned about international terrorism, and you can be sure that it will have a top priority in the immediate future. One of the problems we have faced in this field is the lack of first-rate intelligence. The information is surely available, and we are going to have to go out and get it.

Q: To get closer to home: Alfonso Robello, a former member of the Sandinista ruling junta, has chosen exile and has denounced his colleagues for allowing Nicaragua to become a satellite of a satellite of the Soviet Union—Cuba. Another defector from Salvadoran guerrilla ranks says that there are about 200 Cuban military advisers with the Marxist rebels trying to overthrow the Salvadoran junta. And even American ambassador Robert White, long a critic of the junta, has recently said that the United States has solid evidence of Cuban involvement in Salvador, including the landing of a boatload of military personnel from Nicaragua. Can you confirm this information? And what will be the Reagan administration's position in Central America? In other words, are we prepared to accept another Nicaragua in Salvador?

Haig: It's clear that there has been heavy Cuban involvement in Salvador, and we are uncovering increasing evidence of Nicaraguan involvement.

Alexander Haig by Vint Lawrence

Q: Do you think we have been effectively handling increasing Cuban subversion in the Western hemisphere, especially Central America and the Caribbean?

Haig: My answer is a categorical "no." And we are now reviewing the whole situation.

Q: Mr. Secretary, our European allies sometimes have decried weak and vacillating American leadership as a threat to their security, but also sometimes have backed off from supporting us fully when we called for stronger actions following the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. They appear to be afraid of jeopardizing detente with Moscow. How do you cope with such fears?

Haig: I don't pretend to have a glib formula for remedy, but I suggest that these are not necessarily contradictory situations, but are rather intimately interrelated. These problems must be dealt with simultaneously, and that is one of the aspects of "balance" that I have in mind.

Q: In your confirmation hearings, you stressed the need to balance Russian military power. Can this be done, given the current attitudes of some of our NATO allies?

Haig: I have avoided public bludgeoning of our NATO partners, because my own observations over an extended period of time have suggested to me that all of us will have to do more, and that in some instances European contributions have been encouragingly improving. With the current sharp economic decline in Europe and America, progress is somewhat more painful. But I remain basically confident that if we do a better job of consultation—in the full sense of that term—and if we were to share perceptions of the threat in a frank, open way, and were we to continue to carry our share of the burden, progress would be forthcoming. And after all, until last year, American defense efforts have been in a steady decline. It's difficult to expect our allies to diverge from that trend for very long.

I don't think that a public platform is the appropriate place to indulge in blunt talk about essential resource expenditures. The bottom line is that we are all going to have to do more, and our task is to make our European allies understand that, just as we are going to have to make our own public and our own legislature understand it.

Q: According to the annual Defense Posture Statement of the secretary of

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defense, the United States is supposed to be able to fight—and win—a war and a half. The full war is a major European conflict, the "half war" is one in the Persian Gulf. Can we fight and win a war in the Persian Gulf?

Haig: The answer to that question would depend fundamentally on the nature of the conflict. I'm not satisfied with our current capabilities to manage conflict successfully in that area, and I share [Defense] Secretary Caspar Weinberger's views that we are not adequately postured for all eventualities.

Q: Can we defend the Gulf adequately without permanent US military ground presence in the region? Or can we, as the Saudis prefer, defend the area with an over-the-horizon presence in the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean?

Haig: I have never been a proponent of the over-the-horizon solution to the kind of potential dangers that the Middle East poses today. We are examining a number of potential locations for an increased American presence.

Q: On land?

Haig: Land and air. But, again, it's important that in the process of these reviews, we not create circumstances that would increase the dangers to Western interests. If we showed insensitivity in this area we might jeopardize relations with countries like Saudi Arabia, even reverse pro-Western trends in a country like Iraq.

Q: If we and our allies need such a dramatic increase in military power, why was one of the first signals of the Reagan administration a suggestion that we were willing to abandon the goal of a three percent increase in real defense spending by all members of NATO? This was the interpretation given to Secretary Weinberger's testimony at his confirmation hearings, and to your remarks in support of his statement at your own hearings.

Haig: I don't think Secretary Weinberger was suggesting that we were abandoning our goal for increased defense spending. It's just the opposite. I think he suggested, as I have, ever since the inception of the three percent goal, that it is neither an adequate nor a necessarily timeless objective.

Q: So there was no question of lowering defense spending?

Haig: Not at all. I said it was not adequate. I don't believe in statistical goal-setting; it's merely a management tool. It's far better to seek across-the-board improvements in NATO forces, and we should not pivot around abstract quantitative objectives. I was opposed to the three percent solution at the time; I was in favor of five to seven percent. But every year we all sit down and do a defense review, and we all know whether our efforts have gone up or down. But there are other, non-quantitative ingredients that matter a great deal: improved discipline, improved coordination, modernization, and so forth. If the whole game becomes a bookkeeping operation, we lose sight of the real goals.

Q: One can always cheat with two sets of books, after all.

Haig: Of course.

Q: Henri Simonet, former Belgian foreign minister, leading socialist, and a candidate to become NATO secretary general, has publicly decried the growing neutralism of Europe. The French press has termed this "disalignment." What do you think it will take to reverse these trends?

Haig: There's no question that there are different viewpoints on the threat we face and the priorities we must adopt to deal with it. My experiences in Europe suggest that where there's a common perception of the problem, a consensus can be developed. I think the period ahead requires some very close and intimate consultations so that we can arrive at a common perception.

Q: What do you think of the French reaction—or lack of reaction—to Qaddafi's invasion of Chad, which was apparently supported by East German logistical experts?

Haig: I cannot conceive of situations in which this government will condone or tolerate externally supported so-called "movements of national liberation" of the kind we've recently witnessed in Chad.

Q: Has the time come for NATO and Japan to coordinate with other pro-Western countries for the defense of Western interests outside the NATO area? Shouldn't the Persian Gulf be declared an essential Western interest, and not simply an American responsibility?

Haig: Whether NATO as an organization decides to deal with these problems outside its geographical area, it will be affected by them. And while I do not foresee in the near term an extension of NATO's boundaries, regularized consultation on the issues in that forum is both necessary and desirable.

Q: Are you saying that, like it or not, the whole world should be NATO's concern?

Haig: The whole world is in fact NATO's concern.

Q: Detente was sometimes described as a method to deter Russia from further expansion by weaving her into a web of mutual interests with the West. But this web today appears to paralyze the West rather than Russia, even as the increasing tempo of East-West technology transfers strengthens the Russian military machine. Has the time come for a critical review of this concept? Will the Reagan administration work to limit such technology transfers?

Haig: This administration will stress linkage as a fundamental fact of East-West relations. We must emphasize reciprocity and Western strength in the conduct of East-West affairs. And clearly the problem of technology transfers is an essential aspect of linkage.

Q: Indeed, the president has often spoken of his intention to revive linkage. Will linkage apply to current Russian operations in Afghanistan, South Yemen, and possibly Central America, as well as the operations of their Cuban, Libyan, and East German proxies? Or will linkage only apply to future actions, such as a possible invasion of Poland?

Haig: Linkage will be applied to the full range of East-West relations, those that we are witnessing today, and those that might be contemplated tomorrow.

Q: Are you in favor of rescinding the grain embargo without a Russian *quid pro quo*?

Haig: We're in the midst of a review of that question at the present time.

Q: Should we be helping the freedom fighters in Afghanistan and Angola? And in this context, how will the Reagan administration react to the demand by the so-called front-line states that the UN vote economic sanctions against South Africa for its refusal to cede

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power to SWAPO—a Marxist-led guerrilla group—in Namibia?

Haig: It's been my experience that *a priori* declarations of future actions in these areas can be counterproductive. We're studying it, and keeping all our options open.

Q: Iran is reportedly about to sign a $1.5 billion arms deal with the Soviet Union. Are we headed toward a *de facto* partition of the Gulf between East and West, or is there still some way to reverse the situation in Iran?

Haig: The situation in Iran continues to reflect instability and a certain unpredictability. It is the policy of this administration not to accept outside intervention.

Q: Saudi Arabia's Prince Fahd has just repeated that a *jihad* [holy war] is now the only course for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. He says that peace with the Israeli enemy is a myth. Is Camp David still a viable starting point under these circumstances?

Haig: I am confident that Saudi Arabia will continue to play a constructive role, just as it has in the past. The United States, for its part, will continue to support the peace process.

Q: Jordan's King Hussein says that he doesn't want any part of Camp David, nor do the Palestinians on the West Bank. Where does that leave the US initiative?

Haig: Despite the current anguish, if we look at where we are today compared with the situation 10 years ago, there has been considerable progress. Camp David, in my judgment, still offers hope for continuing this progress.

Q: American foreign aid as a percentage of the gross national product has fallen from 0.32 percent to 0.19 percent in the 1970s. Further cuts are now contemplated. Yet global negotiations to restructure the present world economic order between the northern industrialized nations and the poor developing South are about to get under way, and many are wondering how important they will be in our new foreign policy.

Haig: These are particularly difficult times for the United States economy, where austerity is clearly an imperative. However, foreign aid and security assistance are valuable and indispensable tools which on occasion can prove at least as cost-effective as armament expenditure.

Q: Do you believe third world radicalism can be tempered by a more generous and understanding US posture?

Haig: The American posture must always include essential generosity and understanding, and these are clearly not the ingredients that have been lacking in the contemporary conduct of our policy. So the answer to your question is: no, if the experience of the recent past is a reliable guideline.

Q: US intelligence services have lost the confidence of many foreign governments and potential sources, since they are not now able to protect the secrecy of those who work for them. How can we convince foreigners that they can work with the United States without running undue risks of exposure?

Haig: It is an essential aspect, and a high priority of this administration, to eliminate such risks.

Q: Why, in your opinion, did the intelligence community in the United States —along with much of the media—systematically underestimate the enormous Russian military build-up over the past decade?

Haig: It is true that we have consistently underestimated the scope and breadth of the Russian armament effort for an extended period. We have superb technological means for gathering information about Russian military efforts, but we have to develop more insightful human analysis of the data. There has been a certain tendency to inflate the value of this technologically-gathered information, to the exclusion of tough thinking. Some people think that if you don't have a photograph of a fact, that fact doesn't exist. And, of course, Western wishful thinking and Soviet disinformation have also played roles in encouraging us to underestimate what has been happening.

So how's business? Not too good.

America's Management Crisis

by David Vogel

The creativity of American management has been one of the historic strengths of the American business system. Most of the technological innovations underlying the industrial revolution were developed in England, but it was the United States that pioneered new organizational techniques for improving productivity. Innovations such as standardized parts, introduced by Eli Whitney, the moving assembly line, conceived by Henry Ford, and the principles of scientific management developed by Frederick Taylor were responsible for much of the dramatic gains in America's industrial output during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The modern form of corporate organization now in use throughout the world was developed by railroad exec-

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utives in the United States before the Civil War. The United States still has the world's most extensive and prestigious system of professional management education.

But American business managers, traditionally an important source of competitive strength, now have become a cause of national decline, even though business executives continue to blame government policies for the poor performance of the American economy. A widely quoted recent article in the *Harvard Business Review* asserted that much of the "competitive listlessness" of the US economy is due to the "attitudes, preoccupations, and practices of American managers." The article charged that preoccupation with "short-term results" and quantitative measurements of performance has led American managers to neglect the kinds of investments and innovations necessary to increase the nation's capacity to generate wealth. The authors, two Harvard Business School professors, conclude that many American managers "have effectively forsworn long-term technological superiority as a competitive weapon." *Business Week*'s special issue on reindustrialization a few months ago featured a similar indictment, specifically criticizing American managers for their lack of technical skills and for their non-entrepreneurial mentality.

Even many corporate executives have become self-critical on this score. In a recent poll, three out of four US executives criticized corporate incentive plans for rewarding short-term performance and thus discouraging risky long-term projects. One out of three believed that senior managers didn't know enough about technology and underemphasized innovation.

There is some hard evidence to support these perceptions. Industry spending for basic research declined 12 percent in real terms between 1966 and 1976. A 1969 survey of manufacturing companies revealed that 20 percent had a policy requiring all capital expenditures for modernization and replacement to pay for themselves within three years. A decade later this policy had been adopted by 25 percent of the companies polled. The change is small, but the trend is significant.

Senior managers have been spending more energy trying to increase their companies' short-term profits through financial manipulation. In 1979 companies spent more than $40 billion in cash on acquiring other companies. This is far more than they spent on research and development. Some of these mergers may have led to improved efficiency, but most of them were little more than private sector transfer payments —money passing from one set of balance sheets to another without producing any net increase in actual wealth. The most striking (though admittedly least interesting) aspect of the recent Agee-Cunningham flap at Bendix Corporation was what it revealed about the way many senior executives are spending their time. Evidently William Agee, the head of one of America's largest industrial corporations, spent most of his life running around the country buying and selling various parts of Bendix, rather than improving the productivity of operators the company already owned. These escapades may ultimately benefit Bendix's shareholders, or may not, but they add nothing to America's ability to compete with the Japanese.

MORE AND MORE chief executive officers have only the most casual familiarity with what their companies actually make and how. They are more likely than ever before to have been hired away from another company, often in a completely unrelated line of business. And they are less likely than before to have had any operating or line experience. Since the mid-1950s, the proportion of American chief executives trained in either law or finance has increased by nearly half while the proportion with technical backgrounds has declined by nearly 15 percent. *Business Week* writes: "Just as the general practitioner who made house calls is a dim memory, so is the hands-on corporate leader who rose through the ranks, learning every aspect of the business before managing it." In a survey of 1,700 American corporate vice presidents, 47 percent began their careers in either marketing or finance. American executives are far more likely to possess an MBA than their foreign counterparts, but German, French, Swiss, and Swedish top executives are far more likely to have had technical training. The only nation where executives have less technical education than the United States is the United Kingdom.

Critical business decisions too often are made not on the basis of a true understanding of the technology but on elegant formulas learned in business school. Increasingly, executives manage their companies in the detached way that investors manage their portfolios.

The typical chief executive officer now holds office for an average of five years, compared to 10 years a generation ago. Since CEOs tend to be judged and judge themselves by the profits reported while they are in charge, they are understandably reluctant to pursue long-term projects that depress current earnings and won't pay off until after they retire. Executives frequently criticize politicians for making decisions on the basis of short-term considerations in order to ensure their reelection. But the same indictment applies even more to managers in the private sector. Elected officials have a time horizon of at least two years, but executive promotions within companies often are based on earnings calculated on an annual basis. Akio Morita, the chairman of Sony, recently observed: "The annual bonus some American executives receive depends on annual profit, and the executive who knows his firm's production facilities should be modernized isn't likely to make a decision to invest in new equipment if his own income and managerial ability are judged based only on annual profit. . . . I have heard many American managers say, 'Why should I sacrifice my profit for my successor?'"

For many years, a powerful piece of evidence against

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British management has been that American owned and managed companies in Great Britain have higher productivity than other firms in the British economy. A similar unflattering comparison now may be made between the productivity of native-run and foreign-run companies in the United States. The best known example is a television plant in Illinois. When it was run by Motorola, inspectors found 140 defects for every 100 television sets. Since the plant was bought by Matsushita Electric Industrial Company in 1974, the number of defects declined to less than six per 100 sets. The number of warranty claims dropped by seven-eighths. American managers frequently attribute Japanese efficiency to values peculiar to Japanese culture; but one assembly line at Sony's San Diego plant holds the company's worldwide record for production: 200 days without a serious defect.

The contrast in quality between American and Japanese products has become increasingly obvious over the last decade. American consumers continue to prefer Japanese products (often as not made in Taiwan and South Korea) even as the Japanese price advantage has all but disappeared. According to a recent article in *Fortune*, a new American car is almost twice as likely to have a problem as a Japanese model, and American-made computer chips are three times more likely to fail than Japanese ones.

Both our slow productivity growth and the relatively poor quality of many American goods are connected to the training and incentives of American managers. It is difficult for MBAs—trained to measure discounted cash flow and capital asset pricing models—to work closely with employees in search of ways to improve procedures and equipment. The incentives for managers to make productivity improvements actually declined during the 1970s, as many companies switched from a strategy of expanding sales to one emphasizing immediate return of assets. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the consequence of rewarding executives by this second measure encouraged them to make small investments that paid off quickly, rather than larger outlays that might greatly improve productivity eventually, but that were riskier and would take longer to show results.

MANY LARGE corporations have made the transition from founder-entrepreneur to professional management without suffering any decline of entrepreneurial vigor. Firms such as IBM, Dupont, Boeing, Texas Instruments, and Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing have demonstrated both a willingness to make investments in risky new technologies and patience in waiting for the pay-off. A company run by a scientist is not guaranteed continued success, as Polaroid's recent experiences indicate. Nor, as the history of the steel industry reveals, does a policy of promoting from within the ranks ensure informed management decisions. Various companies and plants throughout the United States have demonstrated impressive increases in productivity by involving workers in the decision-making process at the plant level. But the overall picture remains discouraging.

Managers are not completely at fault, of course. Just one special problem they face is that American industry is far more dependent on the stock market as a source of capital than our foreign competitors are. Japanese and German firms are financed mostly by borrowing, not selling shares. This frees them to make long-term investments without Wall Street money-managers scrutinizing each quarterly earnings report. It is impossible to determine the precise role played by any one factor in America's economic difficulties. But it is important that public discussion of the economy's poor performance not focus exclusively on the need for changes in government policy.

UNDER PRESIDENT Reagan the business community may get many of the changes in tax and regulatory policies that it claims it needs. But unless the private sector's own pattern of incentives and training is reformed, US-managed companies are likely to continue to lose market shares to foreign competitors. Instead of hiring more lobbyists, American companies should promote more engineers. We need to reexamine the kind of education that those to whom we entrust our economic future are getting. Has the notion of a professional manager—an individual who learns a set of general analytical, abstract, decision-making skills that can be applied equally well to the problems faced by any institution—become as irrelevant as the British classical Oxbridge education became several generations ago? Why are the nations with the most developed systems of professional management education, the United States and Great Britain, performing so poorly, when two nations that provide almost no professional management training, Germany and Japan, have been the outstanding successes of the postwar period? Virtually none of the nation's major business schools require courses in production or offer adequate training in the management of human resources. Business schools ignore foreign language training and place little emphasis on teaching students to understand foreign cultures. The popularity of finance courses at business schools probably has contributed to the preoccupation of recently graduated MBAs with short-term time horizons.

Corporate critics also need to redirect their thinking. Except in cases of particularly gross blunders, like the recent bloopers of the automobile and steel industries, critics of business tend to take the competence of US management for granted. They most often criticize companies for being *too* successful in their pursuit of profits, and thereby neglecting other legitimate social needs. But Milton Friedman is right in saying that the most important social responsibility of business is in fact to produce wealth. We need to be as critical about the inability of companies to grow and innovate as we are about their failures of social responsibility.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Intimations of Mortality

The idea of perfect love proceeds from untrammeled ego. Only a self that doesn't acknowledge or respond to the demands of the world can expect undeviating, flawless love; and only a child can have such a self. The first paradise lost is the first perfect love in childhood.

With rigor, that theme can make good art. J. D. Salinger went a long way with it. Elizabeth Bowen, in *The Death of the Heart*, derived an exquisite novel from it. Now from French Canada comes a film that earns a place in the company. It's called *Les Bons Débarras* (*Good Riddance*), is set in the mountains outside Montreal, and is of course spoken in Québecois.

I knew nothing about any of the people involved; seeing the film was like opening an unmarked door and finding a treasury. Begin, as we must, with the writer, Réjean Ducharme, a novelist and playwright. Ducharme's screenplay unfolds the lives of poor country people, with their panel trucks and plyboard houses and six-packs and binges—empathically done in itself—and within that fabric, it opens a deep interior drama. That drama has double effect: it's moving, as it would be in any milieu, but by being where it is, it also reveals more about the milieu.

Ducharme has been daring: the script relies, like many novels and plays but few screenplays, on the development of character. There is plenty of action and conflict, but what makes the conflict grip, in a sense makes us forget the conflict, is the exploration of the daily mystery of character. There are two central figures, a 13-year-old girl and her 30-ish unmarried mother; and there are the mother's brother, mentally impaired and heavy-drinking: the mother's current lover, an amiable middle-aged policeman: her former lover, a pot-smoking, high-spirited garage mechanic who wants her back: the rich and beautiful woman whom the mother and brother and girl supply with firewood. (It's the family business.)

We see these people slogging through work, eating and sleeping and partying: we see the girl playing hooky from school, mom's motel outings, mom's discovery that she's pregnant again—this time by the cop—his discomfort, her happiness, the daughter's outrage. It all sounds commonplace, but in Ducharme's hands, it is the common made epitome: because of what is in and between these people. The script has no good or bad characters, which is another index of the pitch of Ducharme's mind, no interest in such a distinction. Here are only some people trying (though it's not how they would put it) to find and hold some warmth as they pass through, some of them failing worse than others.

The director is Francis Mankiewicz, nephew of Joseph and Herman, who is 35 and has been working in Canadian TV. If he did the casting, he has a keen sense of what he can "find" in actors. He must have had a lot to do with the performances, and they are all perfectly consummated. All the actors are not only right for their roles in grasp and comfort, each seems to know something particular about the role that he or she is sharing with us. It would be derogating to say that they are all lifelike: life is, on the whole, not as interesting as art (or why would we need art?). These people amplify their lives, without distortion, and that does something for our lives, too.

Films with children in difficult main roles always seem to me among the great cultural acts of courage. When you ponder all the adult work, not to mention money, that hangs on the child in this film, you wonder how anyone dared to go ahead with it. I'm not thinking of the Shirley Temples or even such a child as the endearing Justin Henry in *Kramer vs Kramer*; I mean children who are called upon really to act, like Brigitte Fossey in *Forbidden Games* or the astonishing Patricia Gozzi who made two films, *Sundays and Cybele* (1962) and *Rapture* (1965), then disappeared. With such films, we tend to lean back and watch the child's work as part of the general contribution, but it's very different from what the adults are doing: it relates to different sorts of ego and value and fantasy. (That is one of the points of this very film.) All the stories about child actors never having nerves or "blowing up" and so on are not the issue; can the child go to the absolute source of what the film depends on and bring it back?

Yes is the answer with Charlotte Laurier (whose big dark eyes and face full of secrets remind me of Gozzi). Of course Ducharme and Mankiewicz understood the character she was playing, as she is now and in relation to her life to come, but how did Laurier understand it? "Experience," says a woman in *The Death of the Heart*, "isn't interesting until it begins to repeat itself—in fact, till it does that, it hardly *is* experience." Laurier can be only at the beginning of such repetitions—relevant ones, anyway—but, quite apart from the talent with which she fulfills everything, she understands the girl the way an experienced adult would. The result is true and uncanny, both.

The child is in love with her mother. The mother—played radiantly by the

Films Worth Seeing

Breaker Morant. Another rigged wartime court-martial, this time the Boer War. The same old ironies, but very crisply acted and directed.

Kagemusha. Akira Kurosawa, at 70, with a true epic about 16th-century warriors. If not his best work, still magnificent.

Raging Bull. Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese put a temperament in a pressure-cooker. The life of a prizefighter becomes an archetype of lonely anger.

Tess. Roman Polanski doesn't fulfill Hardy's novel, but his film has some beauties of its own, Nastassia Kinski among them.

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bony-faced Marie Tifo with casual proletarian strength and charm—loves her but with less entirety because she has a brother for whom she cares and, naturally, has sexual relationships. The child wants the perfection of her love unimpaired, unthreatened. She tells her mother, falsely, that the policeman has molested her, so he is banished; she maneuvers her uncle to suicide. The subtlest touch in the script is her feeling for the mechanic. She likes him. He is close to her in childlike spirit; she likes his wanting her mother and, since she knows that sex is coming for her too, she suggests that she, too, in a few years will respond. It certifies her childishness, her scenting of change; it is a kind of bulking of the castle's defenses by including some of the surrounding territory.

What is being defended—it's the film's core—is her perfect love for her mother. Her teasings of her mother, her bullyings and cruelties, are all part of her desperation to stave off the end of the perfection. The agony of that desperation is best fixed in the film's best sequences—two telephone conversations between mother and daughter when the child has run off in anger. Those phone calls have as much silence in them as speech, but the conversation is unbroken.

The paradise will go. The mother knows it; the child refuses to know it, fights against the knowledge. The last shot is the mother and daughter in bed together, hugging. Everything is safe, settled—except, as we know, it isn't.

Mankiewicz's camera work and editing are not markedly graceful. He was evidently eager to make his film filmic: there are multi-level shots, as in Renoir, with several planes of action. But even though there are no disturbing flaws, the texture doesn't have the sense of control and discretion on a par with his directing of actors. And there's a fantasy sequence for the brother, just before the end, that is unworthy of both director and writer, quite unnecessary. But the heart—no, the body—of the work is there, the passion of this child to preserve Eden. So the film exalts its grubby world.

Tension and Release

Wealth and Poverty by George Gilder

(Basic Books; $10.95)

"Civilized society," says George Gilder, in a typical ex-cathedra pronunciamento, "is dependent upon the submission of the short-term sexuality of young men to the extended maternal horizons of women." He continues:

> This is what happens in monogamous marriage; the man disciplines his sexuality and extends it into the future through the womb of a woman. The woman gives him access to his children, otherwise forever denied him; and he gives her the product of his labor, otherwise dissipated on temporary pleasures.

Gilder is a crackpot, all right, but this long-awaited attempt at grand synthesis of ascendant conservative thinking cannot be laughed off just because much of it is ridiculous. The author writes speeches for President Reagan, the editor was Midge Decter, the book is praised in newspaper columns and on its cover by conservative gurus who are themselves praised inside. David Stockman, Reagan's budget director, calls *Wealth and Poverty* "promethean in its intellectual power and insight." William J. Casey, Reagan's campaign chairman, says it "will serve as an inspiration and guide for the new administration." So the book is no joke. Conservatives talk about their "new ideas." Well, here they are.

The book's political appeal lies in its effort to combine a spiritual basis for supply-side economics with an economic justification of the traditional male-dominated family, thus uniting the concerns of the highbrow neoconservatives with those of the mass-based "new right." Gilder obviously is a bright and sincere man. He writes with flash and often with eloquence. But his grasp of economics (even his own supply-side theology) is more poetical than analytic; he can't resist hysterical overstatement; and his ape-man views on women are like roadblocks across the course of his argument. Gilder poses as promoter of a hungry and insurrectionary vision of capitalism, but he really has written a defense of established privilege. His pose might be more successful if he could stop himself from frequent expressions of personal devotion to the Rockefeller family.

Gilder wishes to defend the morality of capitalism, which he feels is not appreciated, even by conservatives. His great moral insight is that capitalism is fundamentally altruistic. How so? Because, "Like gifts, capitalist investments are made without a predetermined return." A giver, says Gilder, tries to supply what will most please the recipient, with the thought that if the gift is successful it will be repaid, but without any certainty of this. The capitalist investor similarly must attempt to guess what consumers will want, with the always uncertain hope that a correct guess will be handsomely repaid. Even the act of using money is altruistic and "bears a presumption of faith," Gilder argues, because money is only a promise of future goods and services. Thus, like altruism, "Capitalism consists of providing first and getting later."

This kind of reasoning does more to make altruism look bad than to make capitalism look good. If you start out by assuming that all generous impulses are fundamentally selfish, you already have confirmed the most severe Marxist critiques of social life under capitalism. Adam Smith demonstrated that the miracle of capitalism is how it channels selfishness to serve the greater good, but Adam Smith's approach is too stinting for Gilder. Without giving, Gilder asserts, receiving has no meaning. A person "values his money because his expenditure of funds is psychologically rooted in his earlier expenditure of effort." This is a prelude to Gilder's views on welfare, but I can't help thinking here of his friends the Rockefellers. Do they value their money? If not, can I have it?

Gilder is hypnotized by the metaphor of "supply." What is to his fellow neoconservatives a rather technical critique of Keynesian economics—that it overemphasizes demand management and underemphasizes the incentive effect of marginal tax rates—is to Gilder a luminous deity. The antichrist is "demand." "The crucial difference" between capitalism and socialism is that under socialism, "demand comes first." In cap-

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italism, you recall, giving—i.e., supply—comes first.

Gilder interprets the history of economics as a long-running battle between the forces of good ("supply") and the forces of evil ("demand"). Adam Smith won round one for supply. The invention of supply and demand curves was an initial triumph for demand because "they seemingly assert an equivalence of potency between demand and supply." Demand, in reality, is a weak, vaporish, feminine sort of thing, whereas supply is manly and robust. Keynesianism was the ultimate inversion of the natural order, with demand on top, pumping away to no avail. But supply will dominate in the end, as it must.

Classical economics, with its stress on "perfect competition," Gilder argues, undersells the strengths of capitalism because classical analysis is "static." This is another great Gilder duality: "static" is bad; "dynamic" is good. Capitalism à la Gilder (borrowing heavily from Schumpeter) is a convulsive process in which courageous entrepreneurs stake their money and effort on some new enterprise which, if it succeeds, gives them "a unique niche in the system from which they can reap, as long as possible, monopoly profits," until some other ambitious entrepreneur takes it away from them.

This picture of capitalism at its best is also Gilder at his best. Small-time capitalist risk-takers are the heroes of his saga, and an admirable lot they are, generally. Gilder is right to compare them favorably to sluggish large corporations and to argue that their role in the strength of our economy is underappreciated. Where Gilder goes off is in blaming large corporations, somehow, on "the left." His sole basis for this indictment seems to be the half-admiring writings on big corporations of John Kenneth Galbraith. In fact, Galbraith's views are quite idiosyncratic on this point, not at all typical of "the left." More important, "the left" and government are hardly responsible for the growth of large corporations. These beasts are, for better or worse, primarily a development within capitalism. Having painted a heroic mural of capitalism as it ought to be, Gilder ignores capitalism as it really is. In his world, all business enterprises are small and dynamic, and all wealth is self-made and constantly at peril.

Like his idealized view of the private economy, Gilder's stark outline of government is illuminating as an abstraction, but absurd when he treats it as a complete portrait. Gilder sees the government as a vast insurance program. It protects people against the risk of being poor or sick. It protects corporations like Chrysler against the risk of going bankrupt and banks against the risk of default. Through its supervision of lawsuits, it gives people redress against an ever-wider assortment of life's physical and emotional buffetings. But a vigorous capitalist economy, Gilder argues, depends on taking risks, rewarding winners, and penalizing losers. And in-

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My father on a June night says "God, it's cool"
and I place an empty wine-glass on the small yellow
table in the kitchen, in the dark; life seems
to go on as a series of experiences. Amazing
that this can feel like an insight. There is cool air
when you wouldn't expect, and a sense
that all the poems being written are tolerable,
and someone will seriously read
all the books brought out since 1972;
because there is not too much of anything exactly
but there is a great number of things
and living is to move through them one
by one. Now my father is wearing his white jeans
which are part of his present life which
has come after my mother's death and it's a sequence
of lives, isn't it, each with its own clothes
or the same shirts but they become old shirts
which are not the same as before—platitudes
revolve like undiscovered planets in my mental zodiac—
my father is fiddling with his new cassette tape-deck,
bought on sale: Japanese technology seems
part of a vast system for helping us believe in
change: this is the possession of his latest
life . . . My father studies the dials and
a New York breeze trembles the cover of O'Hara's
Lunch Poems (a present for Lisa) . . . What
was it one had to say? (Not only is it fun
to call myself "one" but it feels correct
at the moment because isn't everyone
involved in this elaborate okayness of sequence?)
My father gets Ginny and me to try the headphones
while he makes a tape of "Meditation Mama":
"Time don't mean a thing, 'cept that the world goes around . . ."
Oh, wisdom abounds, and is curiously unstartling!
One will continue living living for decades, placing
a given glass on a given table—for a particular table
which for one second turns unforeseeably vivid:
the wooden tabletop stunningly yellow and thus
the blazing sun of this tiny landscape which includes
your dark self arrested in the black window
like a sea-horse pausing underwater, what are you doing?
You are caught in a moment of silence in a narrow kitchen
beside this yellow table, caught caring about small things,
an empty glass, a book of matches, a greasy knife, and
your strangely unmomentous reflection . . . And
back in the next room, when one's father
or daughter
offers thoughts on the new movie
one will raise one's eyebrows concernedly and say
"Is that right?"

Mark Halliday

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creasing opportunities for enrichment through transfer distract human energy from truly productive uses. All this insurance thus creates "national sclerosis." Borrowing an insurance industry term for a risk created by the very act of insuring against it (e.g., arson caused by fire insurance), Gilder groups all these effects together as "the moral hazards of liberalism." It's a clever overview of modern government, I think. But as the insurance industry would surely rush to point out here, not all insurance creates moral hazards. Some insurance is good for business, even essential. And Gilder is most eager to cancel the policies of just those who are least likely to benefit from bracing draughts of risk—the poor.

When Gilder turns to the subject of wealth, he offers another of his great distinctions: between "wealth" and "riches." Rich is static (bad); wealthy is dynamic (good). Having a lot of oil in the ground makes you rich, but not wealthy. "Americans confound money with wealth and confuse the actively invested fortunes of rich [he means wealthy] families [guess who?] with the treasure chests and thronging servants of an Indian rajah or an Arabian prince." Indeed, Gilder argues, the value of all capital assets is evanescent. "As soon as the works of imagination . . . become concrete—are invested—they are trapped," and start to decay. In a vigorous capitalist environment, the only real wealth is ingenuity and a willingness to work. For example, a Lebanese family began selling vegetables in Lee, Massachusetts, 10 years ago, and now they own the biggest building in town. Q.E.D.

This is an inspiring story, but it hardly represents American wealth at its most typical. Much great American wealth, even today, is inherited (insert obvious example here), and very few self-made millionaires got that way solely through virtuous personal qualities. Gilder's implicit argument is that wealth is its own justification. Unequal distribution is not unfair, because "a capitalist system is based on an essential psychology of achievement that is equally possible for all classes." (The key word here is "psychology.") Wealth in concrete form is merely certification that you've got what it takes inside. Indeed, it demonstrates that you are engaged in a glorious mission. "Ownership . . . , whether it is one's own land and labor or IBM shares . . . means . . . that the owner lives on the crest of creation, continually informed and inspired, edified and motivated," et cetera. This may describe the life of a self-made vegetable seller, but it hardly captures the joys of owning IBM shares. Gilder willfully blurs the distinction between the few rich who got that way through their own hard work and creativity, and the many rich who did not, in order to steal the moral aura of the former for the latter. "The other groups on the pyramid of wealth should occasionally turn from the spectacles of consumption long enough to see the adventure on the frontiers of the economy above them—an adventure not without its note of nobility."

Not just nobility, but tragedy! According to Gilder, the crucial role of the rich—if they are not harassed and taxed out of performing it—is to supply the risk capital for new enterprises that keep our economy churning and vibrant. Yet paradoxically, by financing "capitalist ferment and creativity," the rich seal their own doom.

> Individuals with cash comprise the wild card—the mutagenic germ in capitalism, and it is relatively risky investments that ultimately both reseed the economy and unseat the rich, as the iron rule of gamblers' ruin plays itself out in the arena of business.

This proposition is not merely paradoxical; it is unbelievable. The mathematical law of regression toward the mean may work its will, in the long run, even on the Rockefellers (though in their case it surely will be the Keynesian long run, in which we are all dead). But I see no reason, and Gilder offers no evidence, that the rich would wish to hasten this process. Are they stupid? If the rich (or their advisers) truly believed that their usual course—which Gilder portrays as one of courageous investment and modest lifestyles—was hastening the decline of their fortunes, we could trust them to change it.

"The persecution complex is a standard psychological ill," Gilder says in explaining why blacks and women think discrimination exists. His own discussion of American attitudes toward the rich is a textbook example of a persecution complex. There is a "war against wealth," Gilder feels. "The ideal that all wealth is acquired through stealing is popular in prisons and at Harvard." And "hatred of producers of wealth . . . has become, in fact, the racism of the intelligentsia." Gilder feels sur-

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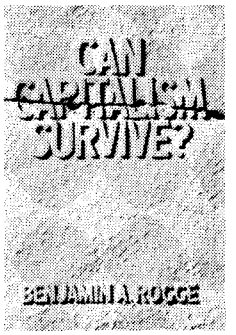

Can Capitalism Survive?

By Benjamin A. Rogge

Penetrating, witty, and wise prescriptions for our day, by the late Distinguished Professor of Political Economy at Wabash College. Rogge explores the prospects for capitalism, the philosophy of freedom, the nature of economics, and what must be done to ensure the survival of capitalism and free institutions. "Provocative" —*Library Journal*. "Delightful"—*Personal Finance*. "Well-reasoned, gracefully written, and gently humorous"—*National Review*. Hardcover $9.00, Paperback $3.50.

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rounded by "formulas of expropriation! Property is theft. Hate is community. Violence is freedom. Reality is oppression." Who is responsible for spreading these heresies? Gilder has a theory. He blames offspring of the old rich, "the defecting upper class," who, he says, have slithered away from the capitalist ramparts to soft jobs at foundations and in the media. From these posts, they use "their communicative skills and social refinements" to poison society's attitudes against the new rich "moving into the commanding heights" that they have cravenly abandoned.

Gilder (who, by the way, is program director of something called "the International Center for Economic Policy Studies") really should see someone about this elaborate fantasy. Perhaps I am equally deluded, but it is my sincere impression that social policy in this country is not based primarily on hatred of the rich. Even liberals, believe it or not, see tax-financed social welfare primarily as a way of helping the poor. If it could be done without disturbing the slumber of the rich, few would object.

AND what about the poor? Just as money has nothing to do with being rich in Gilderland, it has little to do with being poor. "[R]eal poverty is less a state of income than a state of mind." Thus another paradox: social welfare just makes people poorer. "The fact that they have more income only makes the situation less remediable." Taking money from the rich undermines their unique role in expanding the economy, and giving money to the poor discourages them from working (an effect money does not have on the rich, apparently), so redistribution causes poverty. If poverty existed before welfare was invented, you would not know it from this book.

Others have written about the damaging effects of the welfare culture with much truth, but Gilder's perspective is novel. According to George, here's how it works. Welfare undermines

> male confidence and authority, which determines sexual potency, respect from the wife and children, and motivation to face the tedium and frustration of daily labor. . . . The man has the sinking feeling that his role as provider, the definitive male activity from the primal days of the hunt . . . , has been largely seized from him; he has been cuckolded by the compassionate state.
>
> His response to this reality is that very combination of resignation and rage, escapism and violence, short horizons and promiscuous sexuality that characterizes everywhere the life of the poor.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch:

> Once a family is headed by a woman, it is almost impossible for it to greatly raise its income. . . . Her family responsibilities and distractions tend to prevent her from the kind of all out commitment that is necessary for the full use of earning power.

Because welfare breaks up families, Gilder contends, "The lives of the poor, all too often, are governed by the rhythms of tension and release that characterize the sexual experience of young single men."

I'm told that Gilder exposes his feelings about women at great length in two other books, which I haven't read. In this one, he adopts the familiar neoconservative posture of courageously breaking a conspiracy of silence, imposed by liberal etiquette, around truths that are too obvious to require defense. Perhaps Gilder has observed the "resignation and rage, escapism and violence," and so on, of his editor's husband, and has concluded that her partial usurpation of his role as provider is responsible. ("This is Midge Decter's last book at Basic," Gilder reports. Has she seen the light?)

The only serious evidence Gilder offers about sex roles and work is a government study which "indicates," with laughable precision, "that married men work between two and one-third and four times harder than married women, and more than twice as hard as female family heads," and "husbands work 50 percent harder than bachelors. . . ." What "work harder" means, Gilder (typically) does not report. Whatever this "study" measures (hours worked?), it's of course just a reflection of present social arrangements, not proof that these arrangements are biologically inevitable.

As for the connection between all this rot and poverty, it is one thing to say that an uneducated woman trying to raise eight kids without a husband will have trouble escaping poverty, and quite another to insist that the problem is inherent in her chromosomes. How could a single man raise eight kids and work at the same time? Similarly, it is one thing to point out the stupidity of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) rules that encourage men to leave home, and another to insist that welfare by its nature—no matter how it is structured—destroys family life by undercutting man-the-hunter.

What is Gilder's solution to the welfare morass? "The crucial goal should be to restrict the system as much as possible, by making it unattractive and even a bit demeaning." The most important step is "to permit a gradual lowering of the real worth of benefits—by allowing inflation to diminish their money value. . . ." As it happens, we have been experimenting with Gilder's type of reform for a decade. For example, inflation reduced the value of AFDC 42 percent between 1974 and 1980 in New York state, where getting welfare remains (really, George) just "a bit" demeaning. Lab reports indicate that poverty still exists in New York.

GILDER DISMISSES conservative-style welfare reform, which concentrates on eliminating fraud, on the grounds that "most of the cases are fraudulent, in the sense that most of the fathers could presumably marry the mothers of their children and could support them if they had to." He also dismisses the negative income tax (which he identifies as "liberal" even though it was conceived by Milton Friedman), based on the results of an HEW experiment which showed that income guarantees created a severe reduction in work effort. Gilder, naturally, thinks this is because the government usurped the role of male provider. "Unlike the mother's role, which is largely shaped by biology, the father's breadwinner duties must be defined and affirmed by the culture." He overlooks a more logical explanation from his own world of supply-side economics: because benefits were steeply reduced as earnings increased, there was very little incentive to work.

The true solution to welfare is to make it more generous, not less so, by letting people keep their benefits when they go to work. If supply-siders believed their own theology, they would admit this. A guaranteed minimum family income that was not reduced as earned income increased (replacing the standard tax deduction at higher incomes), would never make it profitable to avoid work or to break up a home—conservatives' principal complaint about present arrangements. Strangely, Gilder virtually endorses such a system with a call for "child allowances given to every family, of whatever income, for each child" in order to encourage men to stay with their families and take low-

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paying jobs. This is what economists call a "pure" negative income tax, so I can't imagine what Gilder thought he was denouncing for pages leading up to this proposal.

If Gilder is a bit confused about what he wants to do for the poor, he's clear about what he wants to do for the rich: cut their taxes. The confusion comes when he tries to explain why. Not to help the rich, of course, but to help the poor. "Regressive taxes help the poor!" he sings. Low tax rates encourage the rich to invest more, so they make more money and pay more taxes, and "the lower and middle classes need pay less." You recognize this: it's the Laffer curve. The Laffer curve, says Gilder, is "demonstrably true," but he offers no demonstration. Instead, in one of my favorite passages, Gilder out-Laffers Laffer by asserting that high taxes lead to (take a deep breath) . . . cannibalism:

> The rates of taxation climb and the levels of capital decline, until the only remaining wealth beyond the reach of the regime is the very protein of human flesh, and that too is finally taxed, bound, and gagged, and brought to the colossal temple of the state—a final sacrifice of carnal revenue to feed the declining elite.

In a calmer moment, Gilder makes the usual Lafferite charge that liberals don't know how to think "marginally," and thus they confuse tax rates with tax revenues. This defect makes liberal economists mentally inferior to "a former football player trained in physical education," one Jack Kemp. But Gilder often makes this same "error" when it suits his own conclusions: when he says welfare discourages work whether or not benefits are reduced with income; when he says that inflation and high taxes force married women into paying jobs ("marginal" thinking suggests that high tax rates make it more tempting to stay at home); and when he charges that taxes cause inflation because "workers attempt to keep their after-tax earnings constant." Not thinking marginally, George. Tsk. Tsk.

TO ILLUSTRATE the burden of taxes on entrepreneurs, Gilder imagines, with relish, that Professor Galbraith has gone into business producing his own books. Under Gilder's assumptions, Galbraith puts in a million dollars and two years' labor, and ends up, after taxes, with only $5,719 a year. Ouch! Trouble is, Gilder's assumptions would land him a malpractice suit if he were Galbraith's lawyer or accountant. If Gilder wishes to publish his next book himself, he should come to me. I'll show him how, with the same business, he can shelter other income at first, put off most taxes for years, and never pay a higher tax rate than I pay on my own modest salary.

"Perhaps the supreme symbol of the struggle between past and future," says Gilder, is the tax on capital gains. The self-styled forces of the future, including Gilder, want it eliminated. Gilder says that capital gains are "the way people get rich," and thus the crucial incentive for entrepreneurial verve. The capital gains tax, therefore, is "a big business protection act—a defense of . . . old wealth against new, the past against the future."

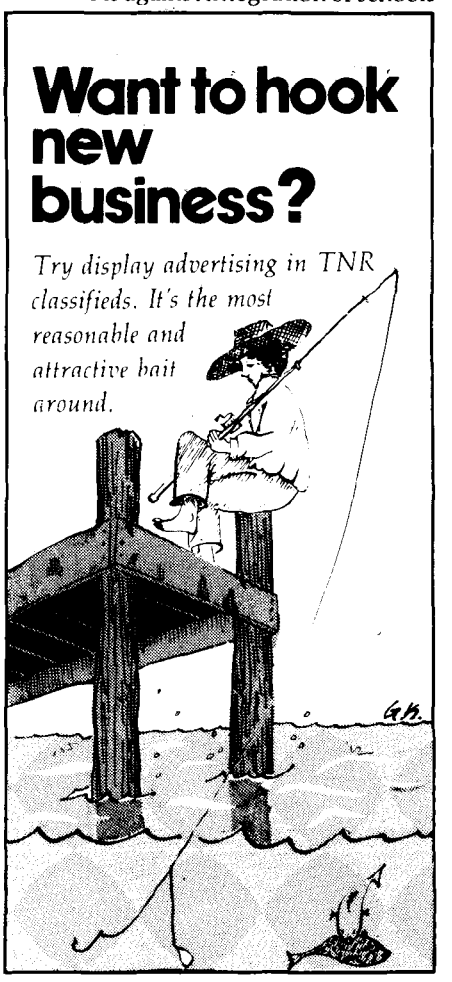
Let's get a few things straight about the capital gains tax. First, it is not high, compared to other taxes. Right now the top federal rate is 28 percent. How many *TNR* readers pay less than that on their wages? Second, the tax was *not* nearly doubled in 1969, and nobody ever paid "nearly 50 percent," as Gilder asserts. Tax-cut advocates consistently misrepresent what was a fairly technical change. Thanks to a major cut in 1978, today's capital gains tax rates are lower than they have been for decades. Third, most capital gains of rich people are never taxed at all, because of a loophole concerning the tax on inherited property. Fourth, lower rates for capital gains cause tax shelters and real estate speculation, both of which Gilder rails against for pages. Fifth, contrary to Gilder's theatrics, special breaks for capital gains *help* stodgy old companies and *hurt* hungry young entrepreneurs. This is because they subsidize retained earnings and discourage stockholders of established companies from taking their money out to invest it elsewhere.

If higher capital gains taxes protect big business and old wealth, why are large corporations and the New York Stock Exchange lobbying so hard to *lower* capital gains taxes? Another paradox here, Mr. Gilder? Either through gross ignorance or deceit, Gilder presents what he bills as an agenda for economic revolution, which in practice would have the effect of shoring up established wealth. Bless me if I can help thinking of those Rockefellers again, whether that is marginal thinking or not.

Now it's true, as Gilder says, that inflation has wreaked havoc on the tax code, especially on the taxation of savings and investment. But the worst effects have been on ordinary savings, which are taxed *every year* (not just when they're cashed in) at rates up to *70 percent*. These taxes should be indexed for inflation. Capital gains taxes should be indexed, too, but only after all the other special breaks are eliminated. Meanwhile, a stroll down Rodeo Drive will persuade you that the capital gains tax has not yet become, as Gilder claims, "quite simply a tax of wealth confiscation." And if "an early purchase of shares in a pioneering firm . . . will often be taxed at confiscatory levels when sold," as Gilder also claims, the recent euphoria over new issues of Genentech and Apple Computer must have been episodes of mass insanity.

NEED I EVEN mention, at this point, that—according to Gilder—all antidiscrimination efforts are terribly harmful to minorities? Programs like busing and affirmative action are vulnerable (in my opinion) to conservative arguments that they don't serve their intended purpose. But Gilder attacks the purpose itself.

Gilder is against integration of schools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and housing, for example. He argues—correctly, I think—that much prejudice against blacks is more a matter of class than a matter of race. But Gilder approves of class prejudice. In fact, he thinks there's a dangerous lack of it.

> If a capitalist system is to expand, it must give social and educational rewards and reinforcements to 'middle-class' discipline and morality. This means that successful families must take care in choosing their associates and those of their children. This process helps the poor by creating a distinctive culture of upward mobility which they may emulate [Gee, thanks], and it helps the rich by transmitting upper-class discipline to their children.

Now, are you ready for this?

> Many a wealthy youth has been mulcted, blackmailed, sued, or otherwise afflicted for his noble impulse to flee his 'stuffy' forebears. Many a wealthy ingenue has been fleeced and flummoxed by entrepreneurial admirers. Many a lower-class drug habit has been financed by rich kids desperate to be accepted as 'one of the boys.' Many a wealthy neighborhood has been robbed by the 'friends' of generous teenagers with *nostalgie de la boue.*

In Gilder's fevered brain these must be the same rich kids who go on to control foundations and the media, where they promote "a corrupt and destructive egalitarianism in politics." Back on Earth, there is no connection whatever between heiresses seduced by gigolos and government efforts, however ham-handed, to assure that Americans of different social backgrounds don't grow up total strangers. These efforts do not reflect contempt for middle-class values. Quite the contrary. A key premise of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court decision that started it all, was that middle-class values would rub off on underprivileged children. And social class mixing is not a poison flower of the welfare state; there is far less of it in America today than there was 100 years ago. The modern development that needs to be deplored is the intense social stratification that has occurred in this century.

Economic discrimination against blacks and women does not exist, you will be glad to hear. The lower income of blacks is dismissed on the logic of *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*. Once Gilder discounts for past discrimination against their parents, education at segregated schools, college degrees from "valuable but inferior Southern black institutions," and so on, not to mention "government-induced dependency and female-headed families," he calculates that black and white incomes are practically the same. As for women: "It is the greater aggressiveness of men, biologically determined but statistically incalculable, that accounts for much of their earnings superiority." After an exciting discussion involving "the neurophysiological demands of the sex act itself," Gilder aggressively concludes that biology "can fully explain all gaps in earnings."

Gilder's loopy antifeminism spoils what might have been a telling critique of the affirmative action mentality. Gilder argues persuasively that the burden of proving an absence of discrimination in hiring and promotion leads to an overemphasis on testing and credentials. These developments feed the trend away from the kind of fluid, unpredictable economy that Gilder correctly says is healthiest. Antidiscrimination lawsuits, he says, primarily help middle-class blacks and women, and do little for the untrained blacks at the bottom of the economy. But it's hard to take any of this seriously when he insists that "the antidiscrimination agencies have become an enemy of black progress" because they help "women, amply tested and credentialed, but in need of federal lawyers to make up for a wholly commendable lack of careerist drive and aggressiveness." Only in Gilderland does joining a job discrimination lawsuit prove a *lack* of careerist drive.

That about takes care of the pernicious nonsense in Gilder's book. Gilder's admirers in the White House can deal with his contention that inflation is good. Now let's relax with some amusing nonsense. (Tension and release, you know.) *Wealth and Poverty* styles itself a

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paean to "faith." "Faith in man, faith in the future, faith in the rising returns of giving, faith in the mutual benefits of trade, faith in the providence of God are all essential to successful capitalism," Gilder declares. There are no atheists in the boardrooms, apparently. Gilder's religion is not the opiate of the masses, but it's something equally sterile: the amphetamine of the elite. His reasoning is that rationality itself is fatal to capitalism, since it discourages risk. The successful capitalist must be filled with irrational hope. (Why, therefore, he must also have narrowly behavioristic tax incentives is another giant gap in Gilder's reasoning.) Wealth, because it is acquired through this mystical process, "taps the underlying and transcendent order of the universe." If this last step—wealth grows from chance, therefore it is divinely sanctioned—seems hard to follow, you probably are imprisoned in "the calculus of closed rationality." Gilder suffers no such debility.

Gilder's final chapter, "The Necessity for Faith," is suitable for reading aloud around the fire at Pocantico Hills on Sunday afternoon following church and a heavy meal (except that the ancestral Rockefeller estate, Gilder bitterly notes, has been abandoned to the public because of taxes and decadent heirs):

> Material progress is ineluctably elitist: it makes the rich richer and increases their numbers, exalting the few extraordinary men who can produce wealth over the democratic masses who consume it. . . . It is the idea of economic futility [Whose idea? Dunno.]—not capitalist growth—that gives license to the culture of hedonism and sensuality.

And on and on (Pass the port, would you?):

> The dream of stagnation exalts the politician. . . . Logical positivism, behavioral psychology, Freudianism, Marxism, classical economics, neo-Keynesianism, Bayesian probability analysis, information theory, socialist planning . . . the modern thinker assumes the universe is essentially dead. . . . God is the foundation of all living knowledge. . . .

Well, you can't please everyone, God must be thinking. In the days before social welfare, Anatole France observed ironically that the law majestically forbade rich and poor alike from sleeping under bridges and begging in the streets. Now comes George Gilder to complain, without perceptible irony, that the modern state is cutting people off from "the miraculous prodigality of chance . . . a resource that above all we should deny neither to the poor, who can be the most open of all to the future, nor to the rich or excellent of individuals. . . ." So *bon chance*, all you poor folks! In the gospel according to Gilder, there is plenty of faith and hope, but not much charity.

Michael Kinsley

The Reason of Altruism

The Expanding Circle: Ethics and Sociobiology by Peter Singer

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $10.95)

Because of this book's agreeably modest size and style, its importance may not be noticed at first. It is easier in moral philosophy to attract rave reviews by writing a huge unintelligible work because the philosophical public, on the whole, seeks not enlightenment, but rather the exciting feeling of sitting at the feet of a guru whose teaching it will never comprehend. Only those who have tried to do it know how difficult it is to write, as Peter Singer has, in a way that can be understood by any intelligent person and yet goes to the heart of the subject.

The new science of sociobiology is an attempt to bring to bear on societies, and especially on human societies, the proven methods of empirical science as used in such fields as ethology and genetics. But it has been hard to understand just what its impact is on the older disciplines of ethics and political theory. The reason is that some of the best-known practitioners of the subject have little understanding of the distinctions and moves in which any competent moral philosopher has to be versed, and that philosophical professionals have not wanted to be bothered with claims that they rightly think are philosophically naive. It is high time that somebody bridged this unnecessary gap, and Singer has done it. As a result, we may now have real insights across this border instead of futile territorial disputes.

He starts with a clear and fascinating summary of the relevant empirical findings. The crucial one is that the "survival of the fittest" operates not upon species, nor upon individuals, but upon the genes the individuals carry (or, more strictly, upon the gene-types or gene-patterns that are embodied in the chromosomes, the DNA, of an individual). Those genes that carry traits likely to secure the production of offspring of the same type will, in the long run, get themselves reproduced and multiplied.

These traits are not altogether the same as those that conduce to the survival of the individual. If I save three of my children from a fire but perish in the effort to save a fourth, I shall have done more for the survival of my genes than if I save myself and let them all burn; for among them the three that I save carry a bigger supply of genes like mine than I do, and may well, since they are younger, have more time in which to reproduce them. Thus the behavior-pattern that makes people perform such acts of self-sacrifice could be the result of natural selection, since, if it is genetically determined, the genes that produce it will survive better than genes that do not produce it. The same will apply to

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many other acts of what is called kin-altruism; and not only toward children, but toward siblings, cousins, anybody who shares a significant number of the same genes. The individual can, it is true, be deceived about which other individuals so qualify; an example is the willow-warbler who innocently feeds the cuckoo in her nest. And cultural factors can make us treat as if they were close kin those who are not, as soldiers who sacrifice themselves for their comrades do.

This latter extension of altruism from kin to the group may have another explanation too: often we can best preserve the genes of ourselves *and* of our kin by preserving an entire group to which we belong, whether or not related by kinship. This could provide a genetic explanation of many kinds of cooperative behavior in herds and packs, whether for defense or attack. Such group-altruism is one example of what is called reciprocal altruism: I help to save your life or hunt down the prey in the expectation that you will do the same for me. The value to individuals and their genes of a tendency to reciprocal altruism is especially evident in so-called prisoners' dilemma situations, in which two parties will each do worse if each attends purely to his own interest than if they are motivated by altruism. It can be shown in theory that all these kinds of altruism would help toward the survival of the genes that produce them, and would thus become incorporated in the genetic heritage of future generations. And, though the issue is still contentious, evidence has accumulated from animal studies that evolution does work in this way and produce these altruistic traits, along with less altruistic ones.

WHAT THEN is the bearing of all this on ethics? Singer considers three ways in which it might be thought relevant. First of all, and least controversial, increased knowledge about the evolutionary process may make us better informed about the consequences of our actions for posterity, and so we may come to realize that actions which, without this knowledge, we would have thought right, are wrong, because they would produce different results from those aimed at. Second, if we came to see that moral attitudes which we thought self-evidently right are the result of evolutionary processes, possibly conditioned by an environment which no longer exists, we may be led to think again about them. Third, and most controversial, it might be suggested that this sort of empirical scientific investigation could come to take the place of moral thought, by providing us with a scientific basis for our moral ideas, including especially altruistic ones.

Singer accepts the first of these theses, as we all obviously must. The second he accepts as an argument against those many moral philosophers who seek to base morality on allegedly self-evident intuitions. But he reasonably points out that, when all this has been said, we still need to decide what moral attitudes to take up, if any. The third suggestion he shows to rest on a confusion between factual and normative statements: from the fact that we have certain attitudes and that they have a genetic explanation, it would by no means follow that those are the attitudes we ought to have or to preserve. The second suggestion in itself provides a refutation of the third; for one cannot at one and the same time argue "These attitudes are *only* the result of evolution and therefore it may be that we ought to change them," and "*Because* they are the result of evolution, we ought not to change them."

If all Singer had said were what I have so far summarized, his book would be a very useful introduction to sociobiology for students of ethics, and vice versa, but no more. The great interest of it lies in the direction in which he takes the argument after that. So far, in summarizing his account, I have not done much to bring out the differences between human altruism and the altruism of other animals. It is recognized by the sociobiologists that there are important differences of degree and kind. The most important difference in degree has to do with communication. Even other animals are often able to recognize and on occasion punish delinquency in their fellows, or at least avoid giving to delinquents the benefits of altruism. But human beings have developed language to an incomparably greater extent than such other animals as may have rudimentary languages. This makes it much easier for us to communicate, and thereby makes possible an elaborate system of morality and law by which we enforce conformity to the principles that tend to preserve us and our genes.

This is not a new idea. Singer, however, addresses himself in an interestingly original way to a question anybody must ask who thinks about the connection between the two different kinds of altruism: the altruism that can be explained genetically, and that is confined within the family, the group, and those from whom comparable favors can be expected, and the much more universal altruism that is enjoined by Christian and other moralities, the altruism of the Golden Rule, that does not make such distinctions. The latter is not only prescribed by the great religions of the world; it actually exists in many people, as Singer illustrates by appeal to Richard Titmuss's description of the success of the British system for providing blood for transfusion. Under this system, an enormous number of people go to trouble to give their blood, although they are not paid, do not know to whom the blood goes, but do know that it is most unlikely to go to their kin or their friends. They get no privileged access to the supply of blood if they need it, and in general do nothing more for themselves and their genes than do the "delinquents" who do not give blood. What, from the sociobiological point of view, are we to say about these altruists?

SINGER CONSIDERS two things that we might say. The first builds on the premise that, as in the prisoners' dilemma situation, the possession of altruistic feelings of such a universal kind might have survival-value for the genes that produced them. It might be suggested, further, that altruistic feelings have a momentum of their own which tends to spread them, once acquired, over more beneficiaries than could be justified by reference to the survival of our genes. As Westermarck held, the extension of the feelings to wider communities (family, neighborhood, city, country, humanity, etc.) is very natural as communications bring us more into contact with these wider groups. And it is arguable that this could even help the genes of those who have the feelings, if it reduces violent conflicts between groups. But, even so, the question does need to be asked: is there not some reason to suppose that, according to the genetic theories considered, genes producing the more universal kinds of altruism would die out, since individuals who have them may be led to neglect the interests of themselves and those with similar genes, wasting their efforts on some who lack this universal-altruistic gene?

Singer accepts the Westermarckian

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suggestion, but recognizes that the objection shows that it is inadequate by itself to account for the survival of universal altruism. To supplement it with something much more powerful, he suggests that not only feeling but *reason* is part of the human genetic endowment. The ability to use reason to calculate the consequences of our actions is something we share with at least those animals who are not guided by mere instinct. But the development of human language enormously increases the power of human reason. Think, for example, of what we can do through having at our disposal the language of mathematics; some animals can apparently count in a very rudimentary way (if four hunters go into a wood and only three come out, it is said that some game animals will avoid the wood). But humans use mathematical calculations in the most elaborate ways in order to achieve their purposes, and this may conduce to the survival of genes which make this attainment possible.

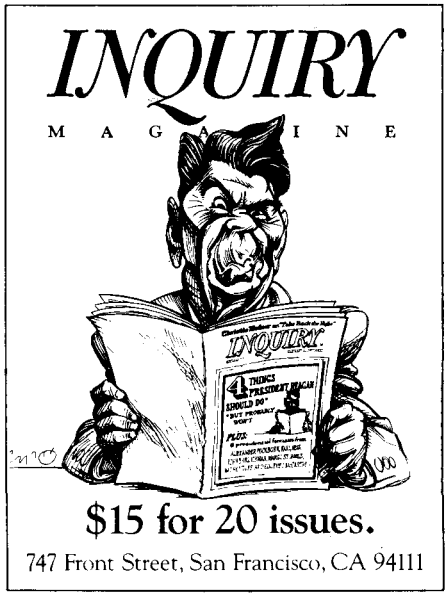
Singer, perhaps, does not sufficiently stress (though he does mention) the importance of language for the development of reason. Like feeling and like reason, language has its own momentum; once people have learned to count, it is difficult for them to stop short of learning to add and subtract, and by this escalation (Singer actually compares the advance of reason to an escalator on which we climb and then cannot get off), the differential and integral calculus will eventually be arrived at. However, whether we call it the momentum of reason or the momentum of language, it exists. Singer's argument is that the possession of reason is in itself conducive to the survival of genes producing it, and that, once acquired, it is able to make us do some altruistic things which are not in themselves so conducive. Our genes cannot have the advantages which come from our power to reason, without suffering also from some disadvantages.

Why does reason lead us toward universal altruism? Singer, in explaining this, uses arguments which are in essence logical and linguistic, though, again, he does not sufficiently emphasize this. Let us suppose that our genes have gotten us to the stage at which we are endowed with reason, and have kin, group, and reciprocal altruism at the level of our own society; that is to say, we have altruistic behavior-patterns toward members of our own society, but not toward members of other societies. We shall then find ourselves saying things like "If I claim that what I do is right while what you do is wrong, I must give some reason other than the fact that my action benefits me (or my kin, or my village), while your action benefits you (or your kin, or your village); and yet I can claim that what I do is right, while what you do is wrong, merely on the grounds that my act benefits my society whereas your act benefits your society." "Reasoning beings will not," says Singer, "in so far as they do reason, accept this kind of conflict in their beliefs." Reason will therefore constrain us to extend our altruism beyond the limits of our own society.

THERE COULD be two explanations of this. One is that there is something about the word "wrong" which makes it logically inconsistent to give as a reason for saying that an act is wrong some statement containing an uneliminable reference to myself, this individual. The second is that, although there is no logical constraint, we just do not find ourselves able to say this kind of thing and feel happy about it. Whichever of these two explanations Singer relies on, he is open to the objection that evolution could weed out the tendency to make our altruism more universal. This could happen, in the first case, if those who used the word "wrong" in a way subject to this logical constraint were less likely to perpetuate their genes; and in the second, if those who did not feel that kind of unease were more likely to perpetuate theirs. For example, when two societies are in competition, will not genetic influences favor the adoption of a type of reasoning or language which discriminates in favor of one's own society?

Singer can answer, however, that although this could have happened, there is evidence, in the spread of universal altruism, that it has not. This might be because universal altruism has some advantages that have not yet been catalogued, or because, whether or not it has them in itself, it is linked in some not easily separable way with traits, of either speech, reason, or feeling, which do have them. Or he could, as he seems to, combine elements of both these answers. This means that, even if he were to confine his claims to altruism toward humans, he would have to rely heavily on empirical assumptions about what does or does not have evolutionary advantages. This is even more the case if he wishes, as he does, to bring other animals within the scope of our altruism (though he sticks at plants, since they are incapable of suffering). Might it not be that genes conducive to vegetarianism lose out, in the evolutionary struggle, to carnivorous genes? One fact that he mentions in another connection could support him here too, that many more people can live on a vegetarian diet from the same acreage of crops than can if they feed the crops to animals and eat the animals; and there is no evidence that they would be less reproductive. Perhaps universal altruism, including all animals in its scope, will prove to be advantageous to the genes that produce it. But scientists are better able to pronounce on this question than philosophers.

Singer is careful to guard himself against the objection that universal altruism would set for us an unrealizably high standard. He is not claiming that we are all universally altruistic, or even that we all could be, but only that there is a tendency toward universal altruism greater than "the selfish gene" would have brought about if it had not produced in us the power of reason. Given that human beings have some altruistic tendencies, and that these have to contend with other opposing tendencies which are also genetically produced, the best approximation to the ideal pattern of behavior, whether from the genetic or the moral point of view, is likely to be achieved if we have dispositions to follow fairly widespread well-selected principles whose general acceptance will have this effect. The requirements of these principles will not be so severe as to put obedience to them beyond the ability of the general run of people; and it will also be advantageous if those



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who do more are praised, but those who fail to do more are not blamed. This, actually, is what either evolution or culture seems to have brought about.

Singer takes the reader through these and many other important and difficult questions with a lucidity which must be the envy of any writer on ethics. As well as being a penetrating philosopher, he has read widely, not only in the scientific literature, but in the history of ideas. He chooses highly illuminating examples for illustration; and his quotations from other writers are always apposite and helpful, though most of them, no doubt unintentionally, serve to show by contrast how beautifully limpid his own style is compared with that of the thinkers, from Marx to Myrdal, whom he quotes.

R. M. Hare

R. M. Hare is the author of *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford University Press).

A Marriage Made in Valhalla

Cosima Wagner's Diaries
Volume II: 1878-1883
edited by Martin Gregor-Dellin and Dietrich Mack
translated by Geoffrey Skelton

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $35)

In his impressive new Wagner biography, Martin Gregor-Dellin describes a September evening in Wagner's house in Zurich in 1856, when the composer read for the first time the whole text of *Tristan und Isolde* to a large company that included his wife Minna, Mathilde Wesendonck, who had inspired the passion that he poured into his new work, and the newlywed Cosima von Bülow, the daughter of Wagner's friend Franz Liszt. In this "mystical triad of Norns who held the invisible thread that soon broke," Dellin writes, "Wagner read of the sweet night and the broken troth, of virtue that had fled and the endless death in the rolling sweep of the sea of ecstasy, while the ladies fought for breath."

Cosima had met Wagner before, at a family dinner in her father's house in Paris in 1853, and had heard him read the text of the *Ring of the Nibelungs*. Wagner's music had not only brought her and her husband together (Bülow, a Wagner enthusiast, had been her music teacher, and she had heard the first Berlin performance of *Tannhäuser* with him) but may have been the strongest bond between them. This was not, however, clear to her in 1856. It was not until 1862, after the Wesendonck affair had petered out, Minna had left Wagner, and the composer was living at Biebrich in the Rhineland and working on *Die Meistersinger*, that she saw him again and felt strongly drawn to him. Cosima was in an unhappy state, shattered by the recent deaths of her brother and sister and alienated by Bülow's remoteness, and Wagner was a gay and attentive host. After one of the first visits, they began to call each other "Du"; in November 1863, they admitted that they loved each other; and in June 1864, when Wagner invited Bülow to help him carry out his plans for revolutionizing the Bavarian theater, their love was consummated. The next five years were not easy. Even after the death of Wagner's wife and even after Cosima had born two children to Wagner, Bülow was reluctant to agree to a divorce; but in November 1868 Cosima moved into Wagner's house at Tribschen near Lucerne and was never parted from him again.

A month after her arrival there, she began the diaries. They were meant in part as a means of justifying her behavior to the children, especially to the two older girls whom she left temporarily with Bülow, but they became an end in themselves. On January 1, 1869, Cosima wrote, "My love became for me a rebirth, a deliverance, a fading away of all that was trivial and bad in me, and I swore to seal it through death, through pious renunciation, or through complete devotion." The devotion—for this was the choice she made—included the faithful keeping of an almost alarmingly meticulous record of Wagner's life with her and his creative activity during the last 15 years of his life, a record that in the end comprised 21 handwritten volumes, varying between 150 and 350 pages, and totaling nearly a million words.

When the German edition of the diaries appeared in 1976, the distinguished critic Hans Mayer wrote, "Here we have reproduced . . . in actuality the myth of the High Pair—the myth of Pamina and Tamino, of Leonore and Florestan, of Brunhilde and Siegfried." American readers probably will sense this mythic quality and may be put off for a bit by the decorous and almost sacramental tone with which Cosima seeks to sustain it. The details of housekeeping, the cost of food, the fact that the gardener did not come and that the roof had begun to leak are not allowed to obtrude upon the story of love, intellectual partnership, and creative endeavor, which is often told in patently theatrical language. On one occasion, Cosima describes Wagner sighing and saying to her in explanation, "I was thinking of when we shall—you and I—be in that other world to which we belong; we have nothing to look for in this one; it was only here to bring us together." To which she responds, "Ah, I find it blessed that life has nothing to offer us. And no claims upon us!" That, as Joachim Fest has rightly pointed out, is an operatic dialogue. This kind of discourse, which doubtless resulted from Wagner's inveterate penchant for self-dramatization, was perhaps also a reflection of a shared belief that their love was no common one but part of the play of destiny. In the first entry of the diaries, Cosima wrote of her relationship with Wagner that it was something that "I have not sought after or brought about myself: Fate laid it on me." On the evening before his death, Wagner spoke to Cosima on the same subject and said, "It is successful once in five thousand years."

DESPITE THE striving after elevated effect, Cosima's diaries are perhaps the most complete and detailed account of the life of a working artist that musical literature provides. The years covered by the second volume, for example, are those in which Wagner composed and oversaw the production of *Parsifal*, and in Cosima's daily entries we can trace the whole gestation proc-

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ess—the frustrations and false starts ("R. goes for a short walk, then works again and shows me his page: across the sketch, which concerns Kundry, is written a furious 'Bad!'"); Wagner's delight over his own inventive powers when his characters come to life in ways he hadn't expected (Gurnemanz's reaction to the return of the spear in Act III, for example); his relations with collaborators like the stage designer Joukowsky and the musician Humperdinck; his painstaking care over details of staging and costume; his instructions to the singers; and his concern over the problem of whether the audience should applaud a work of such reverential character and if so, when.

This creative process was accomplished in the framework of a disciplined working day in which all the time not spent on sleeping and composing and an occasional walk seemed to be devoted to rigorous intellectual diversion. This included a great deal of music by other composers (in December 1878, for example, Wagner began with his friend Josef Rubinstein to play through the whole of Johann Sebastian Bach's *48 Preludes and Fugues*, discussing variant interpretations as they proceeded) and floods of serious reading with Cosima. It was not uncommon for husband and wife to begin the day by discussing Droysen's *Alexander the Great* or the stories of Turgenev at the breakfast table and to end it, if they had no visitors, by finishing Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*. There was often no discernible pattern in all of this, but it seemed to keep the springs of invention bubbling.

Cosima Wagner by David Schorr

MOST FASCINATING in these diaries is the light thrown upon Wagner as a representative of his time and of his class. As an artist in a bourgeois society, he suffered, as Thomas Mann's Tonio Kröger was to suffer, all of the problems of the outsider who secretly craved the security and respectability of belonging. Some measure of the tension this caused within him is revealed by his dreams, which he carefully recounted to Cosima. Many of these doubtless were products of his own sense of self-importance—dreams in which the queen of Prussia revealed that she was his mother and in which he had conversations with Goethe and Moltke and the pope and, on one occasion, a lively discussion with Byron about Schopenhauer—but many others, particularly in the years when illness made him sleep badly, were threatening dreams of deprivation and loss. Often, as he rubbed shoulders with royalty and eminent artists of the past in his dreams, he was suddenly anguished by the thought that some hidden sin or shameful crime that he had committed might be revealed to disgrace him; often his nightly fantasies dealt with sums of money that he dimly remembered having stolen or that he had been unable to pay to creditors; and most often he dreamed of losing Cosima, by death, by betrayal (dreams in which Liszt often played a hostile role), by collusion betwen her and the children to bar him from their home. The scenarios were extravagant and the effects often shattering, and Cosima noted repeatedly that the composer awoke in tears and terror.

Wagner was a revolutionary who had sacrificed a secure position to fight for liberal ideals during the rising in Dresden in 1848, and the revolutionary impulse remained strong in him throughout his life. (Witness, for example, the anti-capitalist strain in *Das Rheingold*.) But like many of the frustrated reformers of 1848, he suffered deep resentments that took the most reactionary and benighted forms. It is significant that he loathed Bismarck, principally, one gathers, because the Prussian statesman had succeeded where the 48ers had failed in doing away with the ramshackle organization of the Germanic Confederation and transforming Germany into a centralized state. Throughout the second volume of the diaries runs a persistent note of denigration of the Reich Chancellor. He is "a bad man," "a great superficiality [who] sees the world through the eyes of a diplomat and cannot recognize a significant personality, only the miserable creatures with whom he has to deal" (resentment over Bismarck's disinclination to support the enterprise at Bayreuth peeps through here); he is "a Pomeranian Junker who would never under-

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stand Germany"; his Congress of Berlin, which ended the great Near Eastern crisis of 1875-78, is "a shame for Germany"; the principal result of his domination of German politics has been to infect the country with a plague of professors and Jews.

Why Wagner disliked professors is not entirely clear, but he was always fleering at them and on September 19, 1880, told Cosima, "If I were emperor the first thing I should do would be to close all the universities." His anti-Semitism had its origins in resentment against Jewish financiers and impresarios who, he thought, had failed to support him at the start of his career and also against Jewish composers like Meyerbeer whose triumphs at first were greater than his own. But there is no doubt that an element of fear affected his thinking, a frequently expressed belief that the Germans were not strong enough to withstand the influence of a people that had proved its determination and durability through centuries of oppression. He was inordinately proud of his essay "Jewishness in Music," in which he discussed the Jewish threat to German culture, and when anti-Semitism began to grow in the wake of the financial crash of 1873, he took credit for having incited it. After a speech of the anti-Semitic court preacher Stöcker in the late 1870s, Cosima wrote, "We laughed over it, because really it appears that R.'s essay about the Jews was the beginning of the battle."

Wagner's feeling about the Jews was obsessive and influenced his thinking about Bismarck, as we have seen, about British politics and culture (which could not, in his view, be taken seriously so long as the English tolerated a Jewish prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli), about San Francisco (where, he had heard, "the Chinese fill[ed] the role of the Jews, sucking the land dry"), about German economic life, which he was convinced was dominated by the *Börsen-Juden*, and about a whole range of other unlikely subjects. His mania was so pronounced that at times it took frighteningly apocalyptic forms and at others silly and trivial ones. After the dreadful fire in the Burgtheater in Vienna in 1881, Cosima wrote, "R. makes a drastic joke to the effect that all Jews should be burned at a performance of *Nathan*," a reference to Lessing's noble plea for religious toleration. During the preparations for the production of *Parsifal*, he fretted over how he might persuade his conductor, Hermann Levi, to accept Christian baptism before the premiere. When he told Levi that he would conduct the first performance, Wagner hinted at the possibility of "a ceremonial act," but the conductor was so unresponsive that he dropped the subject. Cosima wrote,

> . . . we agree that this alien race can never be wholly absorbed into our own. R. tells me . . . that, when our friend modestly approached him and kissed his hand, R. embraced him with great inner warmth, and from what emanated between them, he came to feel with extraordinary precision what a difference of race and separateness really mean. And thus the good Jew always suffers a melancholy lot in our midst.

Wagner's fear of the Jews was part of a more general cultural pessimism. He sensed that all was not well in Bismarck's Reich and, indeed, in bourgeois society. In his last years, he increasingly inclined to the view that the state of the arts was the best criterion for judging bourgeois values, and what he saw around him was the degradation of art to a mere instrument of enjoyment. He saw earnestness and dedication shouldered aside by frivolity and routine, and unbelievable amounts of money squandered, not to promote the true purpose of art, but to produce cheap effects. Cosima's diaries are filled with the complaints of the aging artist who felt that his old belief that the Germans came closest to the Greeks in their understanding of the high purpose of art was being daily defiled, and at times these are expressed in tones of bitter contempt for his countrymen. "Talk at lunch about the Germans," Cosima wrote on July 4, 1880, "their addiction to beer, their beer halls and tobacco-smoke arguments. 'In beer halls, that's where they discover their wit.'" How could such a people, sunk in fleshly pleasures, comprehend the meaning of his work? On the night before his death, Wagner's mind turned to *Das Rheingold*, that powerful drama of greed and lust for power, and he rose from bed to play the Rhine maidens' theme and then "False and base all those who dwell above." "Extraordinary that I saw this clearly at that time!" he said to Cosima as he went back to bed. "I feel loving toward them, these subservient creatures of the deep, with all their yearning."

Gordon A. Craig

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An Art of Distance

The Collected Stories of Elizabeth Bowen

(Knopf; $17.95)

In her 73 years, the Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen published just under 80 short stories. They are collected here for the first time in what seems not so much a volume as an entire gallery—a long parade of small, exquisitely detailed paintings reflecting, with uncanny vividness, the eras she lived through, from the early part of this century through the 1920s and 1930s, World War II, and the postwar years.

If any single sentence could characterize her writing, it might be one from her story, "Daffodils." "I'm always trying," a schoolteacher wistfully tells her pupils, "to make you care about the little fine things you might pass over, that have such big roots underground."

The little fine things in this collection are so very fine that they seem almost a network. They are stretched taut over an abyss. Conversations are as brittle as tea-party china, and surfaces appear likely to crack at any moment. Often events occur so subtly that we're compelled to an instant rereading. What have we missed here? What lies beneath this veil of manners and customs and style?

But Elizabeth Bowen was no mere literary lacemaker, and the fineness has an edge. At times she could be downright wicked. Watch the zest with which the young heroine of "Maria," bored stiff by her hosts, invents an imaginary love affair that is guaranteed to bring

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about her rescue. (" . . . we meet in the churchyard," she writes to her aunt, "and sit on a grave with our arms around each other in the moonlight. The Doselys do not know as I felt it was my duty to tell you first, but I expect the village people may have noticed as unfortunately there is a right of way through the churchyard. . . .")

Moreover, the prose has a kind of reckless angularity. Elizabeth Bowen blithely tosses off phrases that other, less confident writers might have cradled just a shade too long. Without so much as a sidelong glance to see if we have caught it, she airily refers to the "zumming and bump" of bees in a currant bush; the firelight that "pleasantly jiggled," or another fire that "uncertainly flapped"; the "dull shingly roaring thumps" of a winter ocean; the "wiry, even sound" of a caged canary; the "nimbling" of a cat. A glamorous movie star, seen on the screen, "had an unusual way with her, qualities overlapped strangely. . . . She was too real, standing there, while more and more of her came travelling down the air."

In this reassignment of words—ordinary words applied just slightly askew, given new color and value—Elizabeth Bowen is swift and nonchalant. She shows breathtaking rashness in her trust of the reader, but the trust is not misplaced, and we unquestioningly accept her statement that a certain curate has no calendar because he received so many at Christmas that he threw them all away; or that a woman is effusive because she is depressed; or that a man cannot sleep because of the comfort of his bed. Contradictions, paradoxes, illusions. Nothing is truly what it seems; it is always more, and richer.

Like paintings, these stories have a certain distance. Like paintings, they give a sense of an invisible, impenetrable surface between observer and observed. This is not a failing; it merely reminds us how inadequate is the term "short story," covering as it does such a range of approaches. Consider, for instance, the stories of Eudora Welty, recently collected in a similarly thick, satisfying volume. "Step in," those stories said. "Now you are a traveling salesman, a child in a tree, a postmistress." Elizabeth Bowen, on the other hand, says, "Stay where you are. Allow me to demonstrate this spinster on holiday, or this woman obsessed by a ghost." Retaining absolute control, she casts her light upon the painting. The characters—up till now motionless and elegantly posed—amaze us by coming to life. Visitors in a museum, we are fascinated by their miniaturized vitality—those docile matrons, flirtatious daughters, young suitors, pale schoolboys, professional house-guests.

IT IS TRUE that some of the distance is lent to these stories by their very Britishness, and even more by the fact that almost all are firmly rooted in a vanished time. But most important is the deliberate distance set up by the author—distance so pervasive and effective that it is nearly a character in its own right. Over and over, these stories examine separation, foreignness, the feeling of being an outsider. In "The Visitor," a child is sent to another household while his mother is dying; his intense discomfort and loneliness are enough to chill one's heart. In "Human Habitation," two lost hikers take refuge in a warmly lit cottage, but they know the warmth is not *their* warmth, and their hostess is listening anxiously for the sound of her husband's footsteps. In "Ivy Gripped the Steps," a young boy who has imagined himself the favorite of a beautiful woman learns she has only been toying with him, whereupon "the room, as can happen, had elongated," and its inhabitants strike him as "figures at the end of a telescope."

A suitor in "The Secession," who has come to Rome to propose marriage to a certain eager Miss Selby, feels that the distantness lies within himself:

> Round her big straw hat [Miss Selby] had knotted a Roman scarf; the ends, a striped cascade, hung down on one side of her face. Once, between these, he caught her watching with a bright, bird eye; though her head was scarcely turned in his direction. He was touched, he still remembers, by some quick emotion; behind gaudy silk she was like some palpitating wild thing, a bird half-seen in a thicket. The emotion slipped away and left him numb; he was so much ashamed to have caught her unawares that he turned away his head and did not speak for two or three minutes: still he felt her eyes beseeching his return. He was numb; and worse, vacant and hollow. That, he supposed, was why he was so alive to other contacts, those American women. . . . He echoed to their tapping like an empty jar.

Not all of these stories succeed. Some are merely extended epigrams. Others seem trite or contrived—stories like "The Contessina," in which the naive young coquette turns out to be more calculating than she first appeared; or "Making Arrangements," where a docile husband ends up shredding to ribbons the clothes of his errant wife. At times, you sense, Elizabeth Bowen was merely exercising her considerable wit and skill, without having much to say.

But she comes into her own in the group of stories written during the war years. Here, her work takes on a new sense of movement and urgency. She faithfully records not only the vibrating tension of London under bombardment, but also the grinding tiredness and the scattered, makeshift style of people's lives. Some of her very finest stories were written during this period—"Summer Night," "Pink May," and "Mysterious Kôr"—this last perhaps the best, with its evocation of the ruined, desolate landscape of wartime London in the moonlight.

The postwar stories settle slowly back into calm; the most haunting concerns that very settling. In "I Hear You Say So," a long-silent nightingale is heard singing in a park just after the end of the war. The mood of weariness and relief nearly floats off the page, and there can be no more glorious description of a city newly freed from its blackout curtains:

> High up, low down, the fearlessly lit-up windows were like exclamations. Many stood wide open. Inside their tawny squares the rooms, to be seen into, were sublimated: not an object inside them appeared gimcrack or trivial, standing up with that stereoscopic sharpness in this intensified element of life. . . . In few of the rooms, oddly, were any inhabitants to be seen; possibly they were standing out in the street looking in wonderstruck at their own windows. Rooms in their mood tonight seem to have been illuminated in their own honour. Each of these theatres was its own drama—a moment perpetuated, an integration of all these living-unliving objects in surviving and shining and being seen. Through the windows, standing lamps and hanging bowls overflowed, spilling hot light into the warm dark.

This is not a collection to be read

Coming:

Mark Crispin Miller on Walter Cronkite.

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Justin Kaplan on U.S. Grant.

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straight through. (I am barely sitting up and taking nourishment after the attempt.) Instead, it's a bedside book—one to be enjoyed frame by frame, then set aside for another evening. Savored properly, with pauses for admiration and reflection, Elizabeth Bowen's stories show the awesome capabilities of the English language, and the surprise and mystery of the human soul.

Anne Tyler

Hell is Other People

Other People's Worlds
by William Trevor

(Viking; $10.95)

Francis Tyte must be the most unsuitable husband in English fiction since Gilbert Osmond. Like Isabel Archer, Gilbert's victim, his victim is too innocent for this world; and, at 47, has less excuse. Francis Tyte is 14 years younger than Julia Fernchild, but this distance in age is narrow compared to the gulf between their characters. An actor with few prospects, Francis has had a child by another woman, a department store clerk named Doris, who lives for his rare visits to her London flat. Francis also has a wife, an elderly dressmaker, whom he has abandoned. Francis also is a confidence man; he's stolen money from trusting women all over England. Seduced by his parents' lodger when he was a boy, Francis's sexual preferences are equivocal; a lurid scene in Picadilly Circus reveals that he is also a prostitute. Francis not only lies about all this, he lies about everything. He says his parents were killed in a train wreck when he was a child; in fact, they live in a nursing home. He invents friends; a fellow actor plays the part of his best man. And he is clever in his lies. When he discerns Julia's deep attachment to Catholicism, he feigns to share her faith and cons the *Lives of the Saints* to pick up allusions. But the most unsuitable thing about Francis is that he is evil, even Evil. The novel is about his collision with Good, in the person of Julia Fernchild.

The interesting moral questions in fiction usually involve the conflict of good and evil within characters, but Trevor wrings every possible interest from his allegory by keeping it sunk in the particulars of lives and places (nighttime London for Francis, the Gloucestershire wolds for Julia). Like Henry James, Trevor admires innocence as a potential moral energy; he tests it not to see if it will sour into cynicism, but to see if it has force. In Julia's case it has; her goodness proves the stronger. But the issue is in doubt until the very end.

The three aesthetic challenges of the novel are to establish Julia's innocence on credible grounds, to show it first as weakness and then as strength, and to intimate, lightly, the sources of Francis's malignity. Trevor succeeds with Julia, but I think he goes too far in the direction of the explicit with Francis. Still, it is a real artistic dilemma; if he tells too little about Francis, then allegory will rear its blunt head; too much, and the mystery around Francis will dissipate, revealing a case history. In these matters, a little early Freud can be dangerous; and Trevor, I think, errs in furnishing us with the childhood seduction theory as the key to Francis's foul nature. This error grows out of an attempt to avoid the greater simplifications of allegory. But since the essence of Francis's evil is his sheer externality, furnishing him with this gross scar shifts our attention from surface to psyche. It would have been better to have kept us hunting in the shadows of human motivation.

Julia, on the other hand, is a triumph in a difficult field: the portrayal of good. Her goodness is not ethereal; the natural motion of her soul is to form ties of loyalty and love. This makes her vulnerable (she comes close to suicide when Francis leaves her on the first day of their honeymoon in Italy). But it is also the source of her vitality and it proves infectious. (So does Francis's evil.) Julia, in the end, is "still pitying a wreck of a human being who had taken everything from her, still longing to forgive because it was her nature to." She helps us measure not only the malignity of Francis Tyte, but also the tragedy.

Julia begins as a victim, but ends as a heroine. As a middle-aged widow who lives with her mother in a country village, she is convincingly vulnerable to the advances of a man described as "fair haired and rather elegant, with a look of Leslie Howard." It is a nice touch making Francis an actor in cigarette commercials: when, attracted by Julia's jewelry, he approaches Julia and her mother in the lobby of a provincial hotel, one can imagine them disarmed by his subliminal familiarity. We are told that "Julia's tendency was to find herself haunted by plights that were not her own," so quite naturally Francis's story of his orphaned youth moves her. Her mother does not like this tendency in Julia and is suspicious of Francis before the wedding. Still, we are not to take her wariness as wisdom, for one result of Julia's misfortunes is to make her mother more like her: at the end of the novel Mrs. Anstey is herself haunted by a plight not her own, that of Doris's daughter, Joy. Earlier, though, Mrs. Anstey finds Julia's credulity culpable. She blames Julia's Catholicism: a religion that feeds on guilt and that makes its votaries hungry for the release of sacrifice. This is true; it is also true that Julia's way of taking her religion gives her an ennobling energy. Cleverly, Trevor introduces another character to absorb the pathos roused by Julia; and when Doris appears our pity transfers to her immediately, leaving Julia free to play the heroine on Doris's behalf.

I admire what Trevor wants to do with Doris: he wants to show us how much economic facts matter in any life—how the lack of cash, the lack of the psychological capital that goes with birth in the middle classes, can make everything worse. Trevor even knows how sexual opportunity—leave out stability and love—depends on cash. "Lovers of Their Time," the title story of his last collection, is about a shop girl and a philandering travel agent who are forced to consummate their affair in a vacant hotel bathroom because they haven't money for a room. In a Cheever story, that would be a cute detail; in Trevor, it reveals social essence.

Set Trevor, with his understanding of these things, against those novels and films about chic trysts on the Upper East Side, and you see his depth. Unlike so many of our American novelists these days, the Anglo-Irish Trevor is haunted by plights not his own. But how I wish he had not made Doris so pathetic! We can understand that she would be an alcoholic—who wouldn't

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be, after waiting 12 years for the same man? (And what a man!) We can even believe that she would swallow Francis's story about having to care for the ailing elderly dressmaker: she'd keep hoping against hope that the old girl would die, leaving Francis free to marry her. But why did Trevor have to make her a thief; and why did he have to make the grim Joy the very picture of the pathetic—a 12-year-old who doesn't go to school, has sex, takes drugs, and can't read? London is full of such unfortunates, but one suspects that in painting Doris and Joy in these dire hues Trevor had his eyes not on life but on the flagrant scenes in Dickens, whom Mrs. Anstey is reading. For of what else can such scenes as Doris's wandering the streets of London with a pack of down and outs, nearly out of her mind with jealousy of Francis's new woman, remind us? We get the point, we want to tell Trevor; don't lay it on so thick. Your judgment of *Other People's Worlds* as a work of art—and only the highest standards apply to William Trevor—will depend on your feeling about the Doris element. To me, she is excessive. Other readers may feel the pathos of her plight as a powerful effect.

Lovers of Their Time, which Graham Greene compared to *Dubliners*, sold fewer than 10,000 copies while the likes of *Sophie's Choice* soared. *Other People's Worlds* does not, it seems to me, show Trevor at his best. Still, it is a better book than nine-tenths of the novels being published. Trevor is a major writer; he deserves your serious attention.

Jack Beatty

Brief Reviews

The Last Word: An Eyewitness Account of the Thorpe Trial by Auberon Waugh

(Little, Brown; $11.95)

> There is no tradition in British political life by which party politicians hire gunmen to murder—or even frighten—members of the public who threaten to embarrass their political careers, and it is reassuring to learn that their presence is not yet established,

writes Auberon Waugh in *The Last Word: An Eyewitness Account of the Thorpe Trial.*

The party politician was of course Jeremy Thorpe, British MP, handsome, well-loved leader of the Liberal party. The member of the public he was accused of conspiring to murder was Norman Scott, former male model and horse trainer found weeping on a windy North Devon moor, cradling his dead great dane in his arms after a gunman shot the dog, aimed the gun at Scott, then suddenly took off, muttering about a jammed gun. The embarrassment was an alleged homosexual affair of 10 years ago. And Waugh's book is many things—funny, arch—but it is not reassuring. Jeremy Thorpe was found not guilty. His co-defendants, two of whom would have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to frighten, were found not guilty. And the dog, Waugh keeps reminding us, is dead.

The great dane in question was named Rinka, and Auberon Waugh, one of Britain's most raucous satirists, has, like a literary knacker, been dragging the poor creature around the pages of various publications ever since she was shot down. (He ran as the candidate for the Dog Lover's party against Thorpe and his introduction to *The Last Word* covers the campaign—Remember Rinka!)

Waugh, a columnist for the *Spectator* and *Private Eye*, the satirical scandal sheet, specializes in naughty knicker observations about the upper classes and general, all-around bashing of the lower. *The Last Word* is the story of a defendant who never takes the stand, who remains "a pale face in the dock," and a cranky judge who displays "an obsessive urge to treat Thorpe as a visiting dignitary." The Honorable Mr. Thorpe—so dignified in his double-breasted waistcoats and striped trousers that even the recent photographs in this book look like they were taken in the 1930s—never speaks, just hovers. The Honorable Sir Joseph Donaldson Cantley, on the other hand, speaks a great deal. Like a dozing oldster suddenly awakened by a fly on his nose, the white-wigged judge swats irritably at whatever disturbs his pastoral vision of Jeremy Thorpe's character.

This includes the press—"Never ask [the jury] any questions, interview them or anything else. . . . Better bring your toothbrush here if you're going to do that"—and of course the prosecution witnesses. We watch this sweating array suffer accusation and indignity like Hitchcock heroes wrongly accused, dully telling their tales to a judge who obviously does not believe them. In his summing up to the jury, Cantley describes Scott as

> a hysterical, warped personality, accomplished sponger. . . . At one time he was suspected of stealing silver from a house where he lived free in Dublin, but he has denied this. He is a crook. . . . He is a fraud, he is a sponger. He is a whiner. He is a parasite. But of course, he could still be telling the truth. It is a question of belief . . . I am not expressing any opinion.

That is the victim. The man accused of conspiring to murder him is stroked and fussed over. Waugh notes that Justice Cantley had no characterization of Rinka, the dead dog, in his summation. Waugh treats Cantley with ironic affection, a little like a pet frog. And occasionally, while Waugh dangles the judge before us, we have the unworthy thought that Cantley is showing off—hoping to be mentioned in Auberon Waugh's *Private Eye* column so he can sue for libel and make some money. Maybe not. But surely he was playing the straight man when he told the jury, "Remember, I have the last word."

Cathleen Schine

Cathleen Schine is a New York writer.

Marriage Voices by Benjamin Barber

(Summit Books; $10.95)

Take a modern urban marriage. He's a hotshot photojournalist, famous enough to be chosen to photograph the president, she's an innovative art historian at a museum like New York's Metropolitan. Both are handsome, witty, worldly, bright, and their two children are no less so. However, their 16-year-old, lusciously sexy, inspired partnership is just about to splinter into a thousand sharp-edged pieces. *Marriage Voices* is all about the mysterious causes. The plot of this sensitive first novel may be as familiar as a segment of "I Love Lucy," but Benjamin Barber moves in on the pain and pathos so astutely that one quickly warms to his tale.

Nora, the heroine (Ibsen is duly acknowledged), breaks down in fits and

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starts, and not simply for likely reasons, such as her husband Tom's long absences and infidelities, her abortion, or her hysterical mother's and remote father-in-law's sudden horrific confessions. But these pains do join the Babel that haunts her. Like a traveler in a foreign land offering a palm full of coins and trustingly asking a stranger to take just what is owed, she belatedly wonders whether she has anything left. (Amazingly she holds on to her humor and so does the book.)

Nora's mother and husband were the thieves: "There were no two people on earth who loved her more. That was the problem. Love devours: . . . when the two of them got through loving her, there was nothing left of Nora for Nora."

In spite of the Bible's teaching, when she begins to speak the truth, she is not set free—certainly not easily. In one autumn, Nora approaches final silence and stays alive only with her children. Tom, her enraged, confused husband, also finds respite with them. Not so surreptitiously, Barber raises the question: do we live together for the sole purpose of procreation and afterward find we are parent to our spouse, suffocated by ritual, or worse, that we are pointless? Barber explores the abyss where so many real people have been lost and offers neither psychology nor sociology, but understanding. Answers do not concern honest novelists.

Valerie Brooks

Valerie Brooks is senior editor of *Channels* magazine, which will begin publication in April.

Mysteries

Any book by James McClure is worth one's attention, and his latest, *The Blood of an Englishman* (Harper & Row, $10.95), is especially so. McClure writes about South Africa. His series figures are an Afrikaans-speaking lieutenant from the Trekkersburg (for which read Pietermaritzburg) Murder and Robbery Squad working with an assistant, Bantu detective Mickey Zondi. McClure plots an old-fashioned mystery, with clues laid down with care, meanings hinted at and then fleshed out; he writes prose in the more modern style—all blood, bone, and semen stains on the sheets. McClure is also a careful, compassionate observer of what racial prejudice does to human relations. All of his mysteries turn in some measure on the peculiar social structure of the Republic; indeed, two could not have occurred at all without apartheid as background. Here contemporary South African politics do not obtrude so directly, and thus McClure is able to develop all the more subtly our own awareness of how, in hundreds of small ways, apartheid shapes human relations and perceptions.

Another step from a slightly higher summit is Sheila Radley's *The Chief Inspector's Daughter* (Scribner's, $8.95), which is not quite so compelling as her *Death in the Morning*. Yet Radley remains one of the best new talents in the field, and this thoughtful inquiry into the life and brutal murder of the highly successful author of gothic romances, Jasmine Woods, entertainingly explores the variety of prejudices used against the Barbara Cartlands of this world. Structurally the book is fascinating, for it operates on three levels: as a quiet satire of romantic fiction, as an inquiry into the range of attacks on such fiction, and as an example of such writing at its most able. The cost is a lost puzzle, for few readers will fail to solve the mystery well before Quantrill, his daughter, or the quietly ambitious Detective Sergeant Martin Taid do.

Robert Barnard keeps getting better and better. *Death of a Literary Widow* (Scribner's, $8.95) has all the qualities of *Death of an Old Goat* (one of the best university-campus murders in years) and *Death of a Mystery Writer* (last year's send-up of Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, and Rex Stout). The books are maliciously funny, closely plotted, acutely observed, and genuinely puzzling. Each achieves a different surprise ending. Barnard has had his share of Edgar Award nominations. His venom-dipped pen has skewered many an Australian and English foible. One wonders how long he can continue to hold on to a chair of English literature at the University of Tromso, in far-away northern Norway, before he is tempted to apply that pen to the local scene. Norwegians beware!

Romans too. Richard Oliver Collin, a former diplomat who served in Rome, has written "a novel of love, duplicity and mayhem" which reveals all Italians to be lecherous, crooked, and smart. The hero of *Imbroglio* (St. Martin's, $13.95), if he be such, is something of a wimp: Robert Kley, the third political officer at the embassy, whose mind is generally engaged with sexual fantasies of a lonely nature and who suddenly finds his fantasies turning into reality. The CIA chaps in the embassy are working with the Italian right wing to bring on a coup; Colonel Marcus McKean, an old soldier who never dies, is fighting off debts, an incipient heart attack, and the disgrace of his hippy-artist son who has impregnated an apparently innocent Italian schoolteacher. The book is often quite funny and there are a number of effective tense set pieces of the kind customary to thriller fiction.

Scholarship is rearing its head as usual. There is a new journal, *Clues*, subtitled *A Journal of Detection*, which is published twice a year by the Bowling Green University Popular Press for five dollars an issue. The first issue contains 20 articles, too many for 134 pages, so that few subjects are examined at any length, but since half these are on John D. MacDonald, collectors and students will want it. Some of the pieces are little more than extended notes, though Fred Erisman and Francis M. Nevins Jr. are here with their customary good sense. There is also good sense in ample evidence in the new Dell paperback reprint series, which qualifies as an act of scholarship because the two entrepreneurs behind the venture, Carol Brener of Murder Ink. in New York City and Ruth Windfeldt of Scene of the Crime in Sherman Oaks, California, specialty book shops for the mystery fan, have selected the books for their series with great skill. Barnard is here, already enshrined as a classic, and so are Sheila Radley and Bartholomew Gill, personal favorites. Both Penguin and Harper's Perennial Library now have a first-rate rival.

Robin Winks

Correspondence, *from page 3*

by one he bolted all these alliances except the last.

Will we gain by helping Savimbi? The Namibian nationalists helped him gain a foothold in Angola in the 1960s, and now he fights them. Zambia and Zaire supplied his forces; now he sabotages their rail routes. The Umbundu people

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of southern Angola supported his party; now UNITA bombs their markets.

Lately de Borchgrave and a host of other ex-defenders of colonialism have come to Savimbi's aid, armed with the same scare stories that were applied to Zimbabwe until last year. The apologists for poor, beleaguered apartheid lost their pretty boy in the electoral downfall of Abel Muzorewa, so now their attention is focused on Jonas Savimbi. I hope he treats these new friends just like his old ones.

Daryll Weatherly
SUNY
Potsdam, New York

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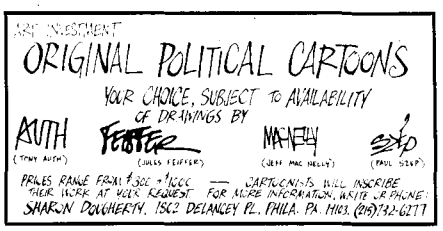

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Washington Diarist

The Rule of Threes

Television's hostage show has been getting bad reviews lately, particularly for its over-eager paparazzi-like invasion of the hostage families. I share the sentiments of the critics. After a few close-ups of sobbing mothers watching their sons (via TV) step off the plane at Wiesbaden, I turned it off. Not out of lack of empathy for the hostage mothers but because I felt that neither I nor the camera should be there. But if television was exploiting the hostage families, the families were not innocent victims; they needed, and used, each other. Television was doing what it does best —providing personal "color" to an otherwise abstract story of invisible Americans kidnapped abroad. The technique had been perfected by Roone Arledge, the head of ABC News, during his days as the boy wonder of television sports. Arledge is the genius who solved the riddle of how to get millions of Americans to watch Nordic ski-jumping and Olympic water polo. He began interspersing intimate profiles of the athletes (roller derby queen lounging poolside with lover, speed skater chopping wood with sister) with footage of the actual competition. The theory was that if you could make the viewers care about the athlete, they would be willing to sit through 30 identical ski jumps to watch their new friend, the 31st, patrol the skies over Lake Placid on a pair of skis. The theory worked and the ratings soared. It was the best mousetrap television sports had ever seen. The inventor's reward was the ABC newsroom, where at 11:30 p.m., on November 4, 1979, he created the first successful challenge to Johnny Carson—"America Held Hostage."

But when television knocked on the hostage mothers' doors, surely the families were not obliged to let them in. They did, because their interests and television's interests coincided. The families had something to sell, themselves and their sorrows. What they needed to buy, to keep their loved ones alive, was a way of removing the anonymity of the 52. Once each hostage got a name, a history, and a possible future—the identity of a real individual—the group could no longer be considered, as George Will insisted they were, a lost platoon. And that was crucial to the families, because we are used to losing platoons and companies and all sizes of collective nouns for God and country. But we find it almost impossible to sacrifice even a single individual, regardless of the cost to the nation as a whole. Louisa Kennedy explained the families' symbiosis with television as a way of keeping the hostages in the public eye so that we would not forget. It was more than that. It was a way of creating individuals that we could not abandon.

The families' alliance with television created a massive counterweight to the freedom of action of the president. His job is to balance the interests of the platoon with that of the nation. But they had become the 52, with mothers and memories—and lives so sacred that for their release we would sacrifice anything, even the lives of eight anonymous soldiers we never got to know.

The television stage was crowded with families and hostages and commentators, but it needed a chorus to interpret these bizarre events. And so we turned, as usual, to the experts. To understand the victimizers, we turned to men of the cloth, the clergy who made the *hajj* to Tehran on Christian festivals. And to understand the victims, we turned to men of the couch, the psychiatrists who journeyed to Wiesbaden to certify the hostages' transformation into "returnees." (Some psychiatrists were so expert that they did not need to visit the hostages, but could read their souls quite well from a wicker chair on "Good Morning America.") The results are now in on the first group of diviners, the traveling clergy. They were almost unanimous in their assessment of the Iranians. The Reverend William Howard, president of the National Council of Churches, on December 20, 1979: "The students were people of deep religious conviction. And running through all the rather unusual circumstances . . . was a kind of morality." William Sloane Coffin found them ascetic, "very sober, I mean if nobody drinks . . . that's very reassuring." And Dr. William Kirby met with Khomeini and observed him to be "very devout, pious, well-educated, and highly moral—from the Islamic perspective." These vicars of the Church of Relativism, quick as they were to acquire an "Islamic perspective," considered it perhaps ethnocentric to offer a Christian perspective on kidnapping. But they did raise a crucial question. How does one mollify an aggrieved ayatollah who is devout and pious and highly moral? The answer was a year in coming. Eight billion dollars.

It is a year later and now the focus is on the victims, the hostages. To guide us, television has provided psychiatrists. Already their words have proved enlightening. One scholar informed us that the hostages would experience relief upon touching at Wiesbaden. But most media doctors know that after a few pearls like that, they take away your wicker chair. Instead, they give more sophisticated predictions, using a device familiar to any medical student: the rule of threes. Whenever you are asked what will happen to a group of patients of whom you know little, remember Caesar on Gaul and divide into three. For example, if you have no way of knowing how people you have never seen will react to 14 months' imprisonment under circumstances you don't know, predict with confidence that the reactions will fall into three groups. Say, some will repress and pick up immediately where they left off, some will be severely affected and have difficulty reintegrating, and some will return to normal activities but show intermittent symptoms. The trick is to divide people's reactions to anything into three groups, without ever specifying the size of the groups or any antecedent characteristics that would enable you to predict *in advance* which person will fall into which category. (Retrospective prediction is only a simple matter of filling in blanks.)

A popular psychiatric finding is "the Stockholm syndrome," in which captives develop sympathy for, or even identification with, their captors. Patty Hearst was an extreme Stockholmist. When I heard one of our 52 urging us to buy Iraqi War Bonds and another expressing the desire to revisit Iran in a B-52, I feared for the Stockholm theory, but not for the theorists. They will resort to the rule of threes: some are resistant, some are susceptible, and some have a subtle and almost undetectable form of the syndrome.

My quarrel is not with all psychiatrists. The vast majority have no time or patience for this media chicanery. Only a small number cannot resist the warmth of the klieg lights. And then there is a third group. . . .

C.K.

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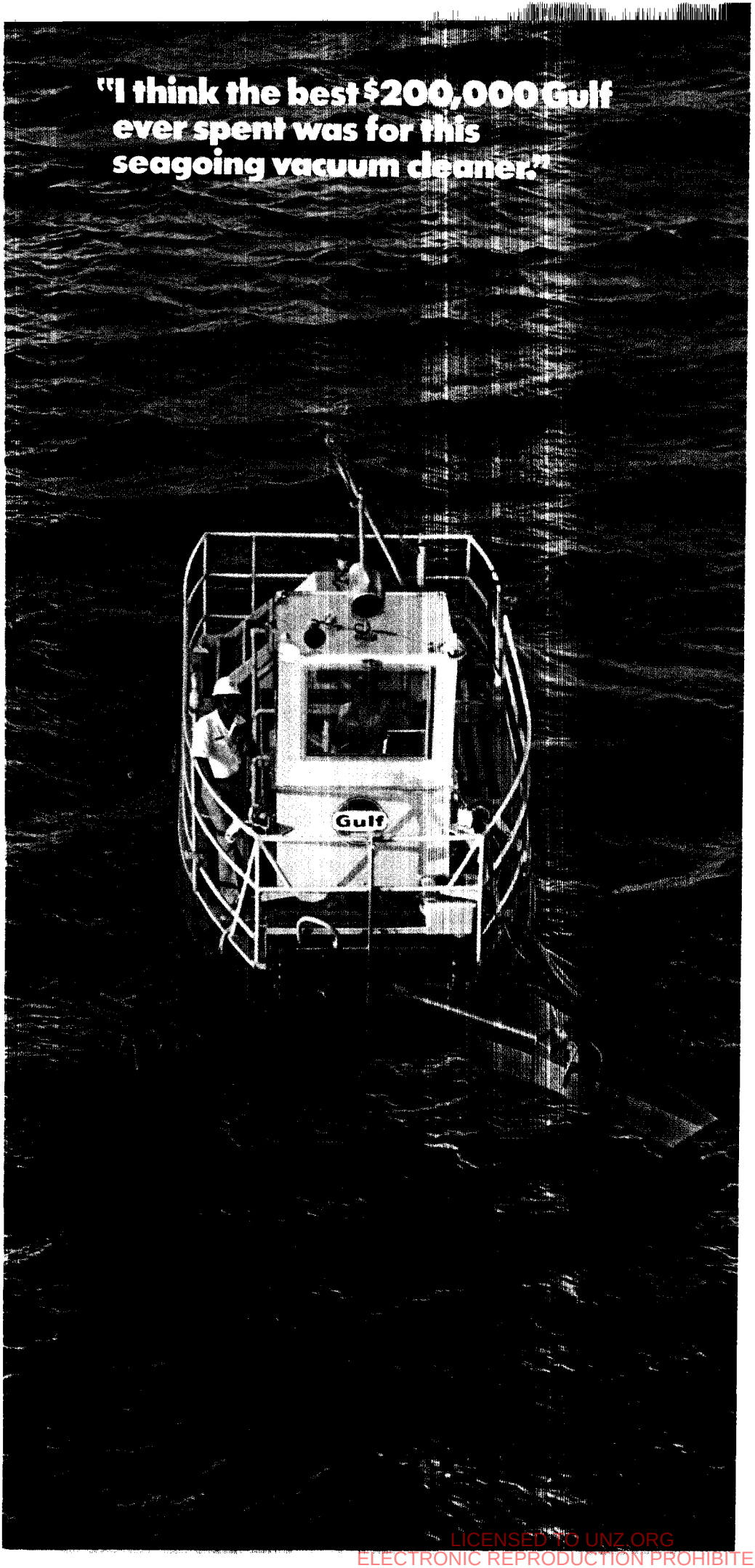

"In the last year or so, Gulf Oil has spent about $250 million to protect the environment around Gulf drilling rigs, mines and refineries," says Manuel Andino, Gulf's Utilities Director at San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"If any oil gets into the water, the Bay Skimmer can pick it up fast."

"But I'd say the Bay Skimmer was one of their best investments: $200,000 for a seagoing vacuum cleaner for San Juan Harbor.

"We've had a refinery here for 25 years. About 15 million barrels of Gulf crude oil and refined products pass through this port each year.

"That's a lot of oil, and if *any* of it gets into the water, the Bay Skimmer can pick it up fast. It was tailor-made for this job. We can go right through an oil slick, and a big belt in the bow simply lifts the oil off the water.

"The Bay Skimmer is just one detail in Gulf's overall investment in protecting the environment while keeping the oil flowing. Responsible energy management is a big challenge. It's expensive and it's complex. But it's a job worth doing, and I think we're doing it right."

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